BUSINESS / B1

Exports jumped 27.3% in Jan. to $4.17B, fastest pace in 7 years

WORLD/ A21

New evidence delays release of autopsy report of Anna Nicole Smith

WORLD / A22

US Democrats demand troop pullout in March, 2008

SATURDAY SPECIAL / F1

Nestor Torre: Why did Beyonce agree to star in film where real star is Jennifer Hudson?

Rich man, poor man share bottom rung in survey

HINDI LAHAT NABIBILI NG PERA!

By Christian Esguerra

THE BIGGEST SPENDER among the senatorial candidates placed between 22nd and 24th in the latest survey of the Social Weather Stations.

That is how far the P33

RICH/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, March 10, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 92 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

RP oil worker freed but Pinay not kidnapped

A FILIPINO OIL WORKER KIDNAPPED BY unknown gunmen in Nigeria last month has been freed unharmed, Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos announced yesterday.

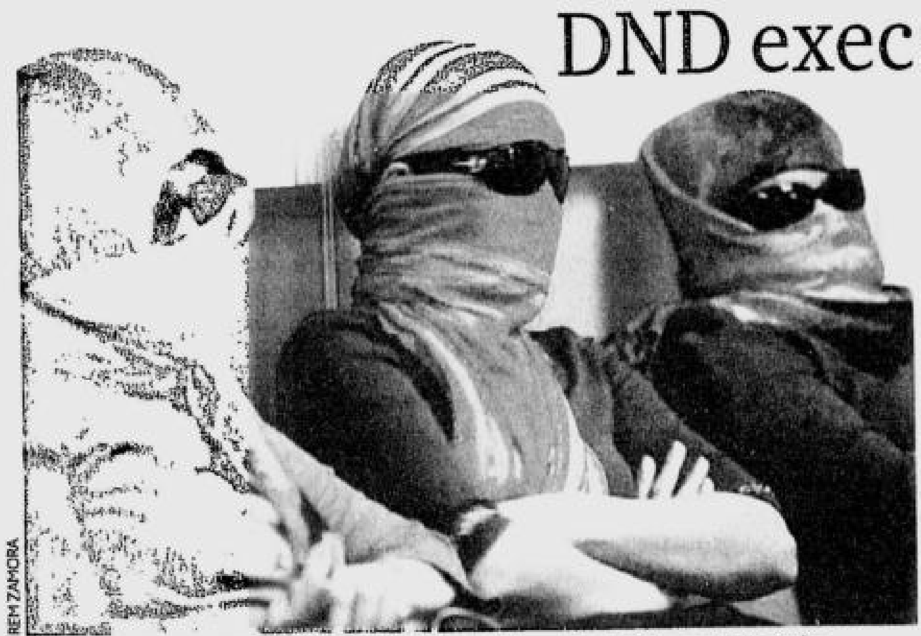
Conejos said Winston Helera, 51, was released on Thursday and was undergoing a medical checkup by his employers.

Conejos also said Filipino businesswoman Joslebeth Foroozan, who was reported kid-

RP OIL/ A8

CPP, NPA face terror tag

DND exec: They must come down from the hills


REM ZAMORA

HERE COME THE COMPLAINANTS. Three widows of ex-NPA members at the Comelec for their petition to disqualify party-lists Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela.

By Christine O. Avendaño

AFTER NEARLY 40 YEARS OF EXISTENCE, THE COMMUNIST Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, could be declared terrorist organizations under the Philippines' new antiterror law, Defense Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor said yesterday.

That is, unless they stop resorting to "terrorist" acts and start coming down from the hills, according to Blancaflor, who is also the director of the country's antiterrorism task force.

Blancaflor accused the CPP-NPA of committing acts that fall under the definition of terrorism under the Human Security Act, or antiterror law, which will take effect on July 14, or two months after the May elections.

"Now, if they will stop doing (acts of terrorism) after July 14, if they will start coming down from the hills, if they will stop these abuses, condemn their own killings, then there will be no need to tag them as terrorists," Blanclaflor told reporters.

As of this time, the antiterror law—which President Macapagal-Arroyo signed earlier this week—is not yet in effect, he said.

If it should declare the CPP-NPA as terrorist groups, the Arroyo administration will actually be following in the footsteps of the United States, which has included the two organizations on its list of foreign terrorist organizations.

The CPP was established in December 1968 and the NPA about three months later.

Blancaflor said several other groups, such as the Abu Sayyaf bandits, could be classified as terrorist after the law takes effect.

Blancaflor said that after July 14, a working group would be created to start a "proscription process" expected to result in the drawing up of a terrorist list.

CPP/ A17

Joma, Satur: We were in jail during killings

By Christian V. Esguerra and TJ Burgonio

THE FOUNDING CHAIR OF THE Communist Party of the Philippines and another leftist leader said yesterday they could not have ordered the killings of suspected military spies in Leyte in the 1980s because they were in jail at the time.

The denials came as the government widened the hunt for another leftist leader, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, who had made himself scarce— and even stopped taking phone calls—after he was also linked to the 22-year-old murders.

CPP founder Jose Maria Sison and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas deputy secretary general Randall Echanis issued separate denials of involvement in the killings of communist rebels suspected of spying for the military.

The National Bureau of Investigation has joined the hunt for Ocampo.

Regional Director Ruel Lasala, chief of the NBI National Capital Region, said five teams from the bureau were now looking for Ocampo in the metropolis.

Ocampo is also being hunted in other parts of the country as the bureau's regional offices have already been placed on alert, said Reynaldo Esmeralda, deputy director for NBI regional operations service.

Lasala said the arrest warrant had

JOMA/ A17

Bayan Muna, allies leading party-list race–SWS survey

By Kate Pedroso
Inquirer Research

NINE PARTY-LIST GROUPS HAVE met the minimum 2-percent rule, with 66 percent of registered voters—an estimated 30.9 million adult Filipinos—voting for their preference in the Social Weather Stations' First Quarter 2007 Social Weather Survey.

The militant Bayan Muna led the list with over 5,400 voters (17 percent), followed by its allies Anakpawis (9.4 percent) and Gabriela (8.1 percent). The other groups who made the cut were Aangat Ka Pinoy (5.9 percent), An Waray (5.1 percent), Aangat Tayo (4.2 percent), Akbayan (4 percent), Aba-Ako (2.3 percent) and Anak Mindanao (Amin) (2.2 percent).

SWS said that with the survey results, Bayan Muna would retain the three seats currently occupied by Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador, while Amin will retain its lone seat

BAYAN/ A MUNA17

LYN RILLON

PHOTO OP WITH GMA: During a break at the Philippine Development Forum 2007 in Cebu City on Friday, two ladies position themselves for a souvenir shot with the President who, however, is deep in shop talk with PDF Chair and Finance Secretary Margarito Teves (left) and World Bank Country Director Joachim von Amsberg.

Quintos brods' pa: Solgen lawyering for Villarosa

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Leila B. Salaverria

FEELING BETRAYED BY THE OFFICE OF the Solicitor General, Ricardo Quintos says his only recourse now is to pray for justice from the heavens.

"What can we do but to exert our legal efforts, then abandon and pray for the mercy of justice. One that is true, perfect and permanent," said Quintos, a former governor of Occidental Mindoro.

Quintos waited for almost 10 years to obtain court justice for his two sons, Michael and Paul, who were shot dead at a party in Mamburao on Dec. 13, 1997.

On March 1, 2006, Jose Villarosa, a former Occidental Mindoro congressman, and six farmers known as the "Mamburao 6," were sentenced to death by a Quezon City court for the murder of the Quintos brothers. The case is on appeal.

"Why didn't they [the OSG] just wait for the Court of Appeals to decide on the

QUINTOS/ A8

Bill Gates still richest; Indians top Japanese

NEW YORK—MICROSOFT CO-FOUNDER Bill Gates is still the richest man in the world, but his lead over other entrepreneurs is narrowing, according to Forbes magazine's newly released list of billionaires.

Gates led the super rich list for the 13th straight year with a tidy nest egg of $56 billion followed by US investment guru Warren Buffett with $52 billion.

There were now a record 946 billionaires in the world, up more than 150 from last year, with Forbes attributing the increase to a commodities boom, the march of technology and the relative weakness of the US dollar.

BILL GATES/ A8

Hands On volunteers rebuild Bicol town

By TJ Burgonio

STO. DOMINGO, ALBAY—THREE SCHOOLboys peered through the window's bamboo slats as Barbara Lacy, Andrea Gillespie, Ninfa Bito and several others deftly applied green paint on wooden desks inside the decrepit classroom.

That task done, the group headed outdoors for some fresh air and then clambered up a bamboo ladder to get to the new tin roof, on which they brushed bright yellow paint.

They worked for hours, unmindful of the drizzle that gave way to searing heat.

Elsewhere, against the backdrop of a mist-shrouded Mayon Volcano, Jessica Kondratoff and a shirtless Tim Fudge vigorously shoveled four-meter-high black ash from the sides of a one-story concrete house.

Solomon Fombi and Norman Brackenridge hammered a tarpaulin onto the roof of another dwelling, and Ken Maher hopped from house to house, asking about the residents' needs.

It was all in a day's work for volunteers who had flown in from across the globe to

HANDS/ A7

NINFA 7. BITO/CONTRIBUTOR

COOL CATS ON HOT TIN ROOF of a daycare center which is about to get a new coat of hot yellow paint, thanks to the volunteers of the US-based Hands On Disaster Response who's here to help rebuild "Reming"-battered Sto. Domingo, Albay.

For better memory, stop, smell the roses

WASHINGTON—PEOPLE WHO WANT to learn things might do better by simply stopping to smell the roses, researchers reported on Thursday.

German researchers found they could use odors to reactivate new memories in the brains of people while they slept—and the volunteers remembered better later.

Writing in the journal Science, they said their study showed that memories are indeed consolidated during sleep, and show that smells and perhaps other stimuli can reinforce brain learning pathways.

Jan Born of the University of Lubeck in

FOR BETTER/ A8

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SATURDAY, MARCH 10, 2007

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon and Samar Provinces will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Party Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQ RESEARCH/03/08/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Nur barred from Saudi embassy

By DJ Yap

DETAINED MUSLIM REBEL leader Nur Misuari was barred yesterday from entering the Embassy of Saudi Arabia where he was to perform noon prayers after his police escorts refused to hand over their firearms to the embassy's security personnel.

Misuari was supposed to join a Friday prayer congregation with representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, who were in town to discuss details of the upcoming tripartite peace talks in Jeddah.

"...After the arrival of Chairman Misuari inside the Embassy premises, he was not able to perform the Friday prayer due to the refusal of his close-in security to leave their firearms behind..." Saudi Arabia's charge d'affaires Mohammed Nabil Bokharee said.

He said this was "despite the assurance of the Embassy that it would take full responsibility for the safety and security of Chairman Misuari inside the Embassy and his return to their custody after the prayer."

In a statement, Bokharee said the Saudi Embassy regretted the incident.

He said the insistence of the close-in security personnel to bring along their firearms was a "violation of international diplomatic agreements."

Like all embassies, the Saudi embassy is strict in enforcing security policies for visitors, with signs at the gates saying all weapons, as well as electronic equipment, including cellular phones, should be surrendered.

NO FRIDAY PRAYERS for Nur Misuari, who was taken to the Saudi Embassy for noon prayers, only to be turned away because his escorts refused to surrender their guns at the gate. Inside the car which he never left, Misuari manages a smile despite everything.

JOSEPH F. ASSAD/ HONORARY CONSUL OF LEBANON TO THE PHILIPPINES

"We're very disappointed. They (police escorts) should have respected the embassy policies. For all intents and purposes, this is a territory of Saudi Arabia," said Ombra Jainal, Misuari's lawyer.

Almarin Centi Tillah, president and chair of the Islamic Society, who joined the prayer, assailed the action of the police escorts, saying they deprived Misuari of his right to pray.

"This is embarrassing, especially to the OIC. They should have respected the embassy," he said.

Ambassador Sayyed Kassem El-Masry, who heads the OIC delegation, declined to comment on the incident.

The OIC and the Philippines will meet in July with leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front to review an 11-year-old peace pact amid complaints implementation has been slow, an official said.

One sticking point is the continued detention of Misuari, who signed the historic 1996 peace agreement with the government but was arrested in 2001 after his followers launched an uprising that left 100 people dead.

"He is the chairman of the MNLF and he should be there in all the talks regarding the peace agreement," El-Masry, an adviser to the OIC secretary general, told reporters.

Misuari, founder of the MILF, has been under house arrest since mid-2006. He is facing rebellion charges.

El-Masry said the OIC asked the Philippines to allow Misuari to travel to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, for the July meeting, and that Presidential Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno promised to help.

He said the government had promised to "expedite" the resolution of Misuari's rebellion case, now pending before a Makati City court.

"We hope that by July this legal hurdle will be finished and he's able to attend."

The Philippines earlier wanted the talks held in Manila, but agreed to the OIC proposal to open the meeting in Jeddah then move it to Manila, he said.

With Inquirer wires

DAR pledge just for show, farmers say

By TJ Burgonio

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM failed to deliver on its promise to install 122 farmer-beneficiaries in their land inside a sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental last Wednesday, prompting the farmers' lawyer to brand preparations for the event as "just for show."

"It was a very expensive show. It was just for show," Christian Monsod, counsel and member of the board of trustees of the Task Force Mapalad (TFM), umbrella organization of groups composing most of the land reform beneficiaries, said yesterday.

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman called off the installation, saying he wanted to avert a clash between the beneficiaries and a rival group of farmers.

Monsod said that the government troops deployed in the area were ready to install the farmers inside their 144-hectare land in Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town throughout Wednesday, but got no orders from Pangandaman.

The DAR placed the land under the coverage of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and later granted the farmers a collective certificate of land ownership to the land in 2002. The landowner, Robert Cuenca, questioned the move before the courts.

In 2004, the Supreme Court ruled that all controversies pertaining to agrarian reform fell under DAR's jurisdiction, paving the way for their installation.

"The military was there. The military was ready to install. 'We can install; we're just waiting for word from the DAR to install the farmers,' the soldiers said. And the word never came," Monsod lamented.

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DOS AMIGOS. Senators Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo gamely join a "boodle" fight at lunch in a sortie in Capas, Tarlac Thursday. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Recto unfazed by govs' threat to junk him, if...

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SOME GOVERNORS ARE THREATening to junk reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto if his wife, popular actress Vilma Santos, runs for governor of Batangas.

Two governors told the INQUIRER yesterday that this was the position taken by some members of the League of Provinces of the Philippines, the alliance of the country's 81 governors, during their meeting on Wednesday.

They said the governors' sentiments were relayed to President Macapagal-Arroyo who hosted a dinner for them in Malacañang on the same night. Recto also attended the dinner.

But Recto, a candidate of the administration's Team Unity, was unfazed by the threat, saying not all governors will junk him if his wife ran against incumbent Gov. Armand Sanchez, a member of the LPP.

"I won't be blackmailed by a few governors into convincing Vilma not to run," said Recto, who said he does not dictate on his wife's political decisions.

Recto said the threat to junk him was being made by a "clique" allied with Sanchez.

The governors' position becomes the latest kink in Batangas politics. Recto's brother, Batangas Vice Gov. Ricky Recto, is running for governor under the opposition. Santos is being urged to run by Batangas mayors and Church leaders and has asked for a week to make a decision.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong, a member of the LPP national executive committee, said majority of the governors will support their member, Sanchez, against Santos who is expected to announce her gubernatorial bid on Monday.

"We cannot support Senator Recto if he will fight the administration candidate (in Batangas). If he fights our colleague, the position of the governors is that we will not support him," Loong told the INQUIRER.

A source in the LPP said at least 17 governors would junk Recto if he pitted his wife against Sanchez.

Loong said that while the LPP wants to deliver a 12-0 victory for Team Unity, the candidacy of Santos will have repercussions on Recto's reelection bid.

But the LPP on the same day passed a resolution expressing support for the 12 candidates of Team Unity.

Agusan del Sur Gov. Adolph Edward Plaza also confirmed the governors' position but said this has not been finalized into a formal manifesto. He said the position was shared by a majority of the governors.

He said that in the event of a Santos-Sanchez showdown in Batangas, the governors will have to decide whether or not they will support Recto for senator.

Meanwhile, Recto confirmed that during the President's dinner with the governors he made the statement: "My governor in Batangas is Governor Sanchez."

He however clarified that he was not endorsing Sanchez, but only pointing out the fact that Sanchez is the incumbent Batangas governor. "I was just trying to be nice because he (Sanchez) was present," Recto said.

Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said that as of now, the administration candidate for Batangas governor is Sanchez.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, whose son Edwin will be drafted as Santos' running mate if she makes a go for it, had said the ruling party Lakas-CMD would make Santos its official candidate.

As this developed, the 60,000-strong Philippine Councilors League still sees the senatorial elections as an unfinished battle between President Arroyo and deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Carlo Fortuna, national president of the Philippine Councilors League (PCL), said at the end of its two-day end-term national assembly at the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC) that the elections were an extension of the political rivalry between the two leaders.

Fortuna said the league would support Ms Arroyo's senatorial ticket, saying she was the only leader who was able to deliver the Internal Revenue Allotments (IRA) of local government units completely.

According to Fortuna, the P17 billion IRA of local government units have already been released by the President. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Lomibao quits NIA, will go up vs Joe de V, Lim

FORMER PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police chief Arturo C. Lomibao has resigned as administrator of National Irrigation Administration and has thrown his hat into the political ring in Pangasinan.

Lomibao, in his resignation letter, informed President Macapagal-Arroyo of his political plans. Ms Arroyo accepted Lomibao's resignation on Feb. 22, according to a press statement from Lomibao.

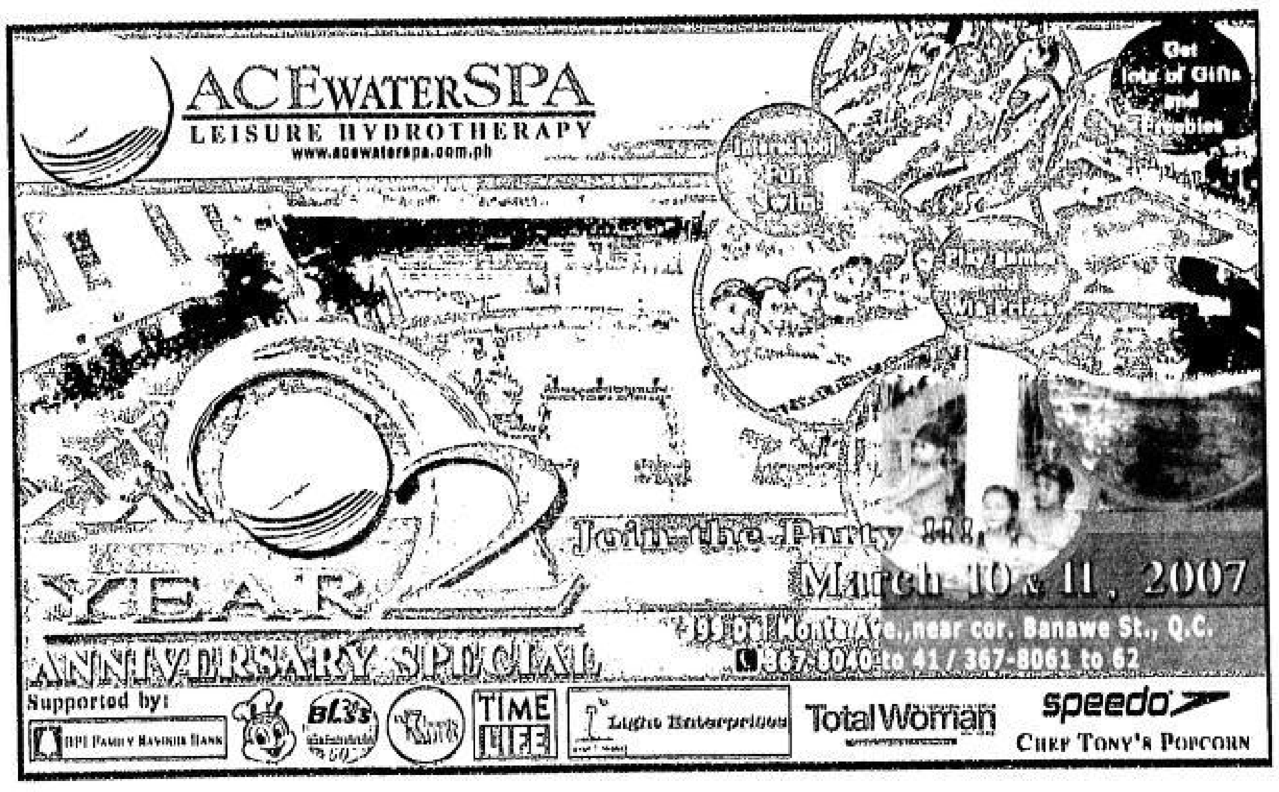
The former PNP chief was introduced before delegates at the Kabalikat ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kampi) national convention at the Manila Hotel recently.

Lomibao will contest the fourth congressional district of Pangasinan against Speaker Jose de Venecia and Dagupan City Mayor Benjie Lim.

As former head of the country's police force and irrigation agency, Lomibao is expected to run on a platform of security and development through legislation that will enhance peace and order and the well-being of farmers.

Lomibao will thus make what is already a much-awaited showdown between De Venecia and Lim into a three-cornered fight

Lomibao is claiming credit for implementing the PNP Transformation Program, which has become the blueprint for improving the morale, credibility and living conditions of police personnel, and the building of more than a 100 world-class police stations nationwide.



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World Bank advice to RP: Reform more, scrimp less

MORE REFORMS AND LESS SCRIMPING IS the best way forward for the Philippines, a World Bank official said yesterday, urging the government to take further steps to boost its revenue base.

World Bank Philippine country director Joachim von Amsberg lauded the government's fiscal management strategy over the last two years but said new revenue measures were needed to deliver more social services and the infrastructure required for higher economic growth.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo stabilized the revenue base with the passage of key tax laws in 2004.

International credit rating agencies have been reluctant to raise the country's sovereign rating, saying revenues were growing only marginally faster than economic output, with nearly a third of the take going to debt service.

The government cut the budget deficit to P62.2 billion last year, half its target ceiling, mainly through reduced capital outlays.

"It is also critical that the fiscal consolidation be based on increasing revenues, since further expenditure compression is neither desirable nor sustainable," von Amsberg told a news conference.

The World Bank said that to raise revenue, the government should phase out redundant tax incentives and attack smuggling.

It reiterated its concern about governance and corruption, especially in large corporations owned and controlled by the government.

Von Amsberg urged the government to raise its rate of investment to at least 20 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), from 15 percent.

"The fiscal reforms and the favorable international environment provide a window of opportunity to increase the investment rate to rates more typical of comparable economies—that is, 20 percent of GDP or higher," he added.

He said fiscal reforms in the last two years had led to lower interest rates and improved borrowing spreads, stronger financial markets, slower inflation and surgeing foreign direct investment.

Von Amsberg said that without the fiscal reforms, the financial markets here would have been weakened considerably by last week's equities sell-off around the world.

Speaking at the same forum, President Arroyo expressed agreement, remarking that "Joachim is right in saying that there is much much more room for investments to grow to have a strong impact on alleviating poverty."

She said the government aimed to cut red tape and build infrastructure, and agreed that new laws must be passed rationalizing incentives.

"Our solid economic indicators give us a fighting chance to achieve at least seven percent (GDP) growth moving forward to 2010," she reiterated.

AFP

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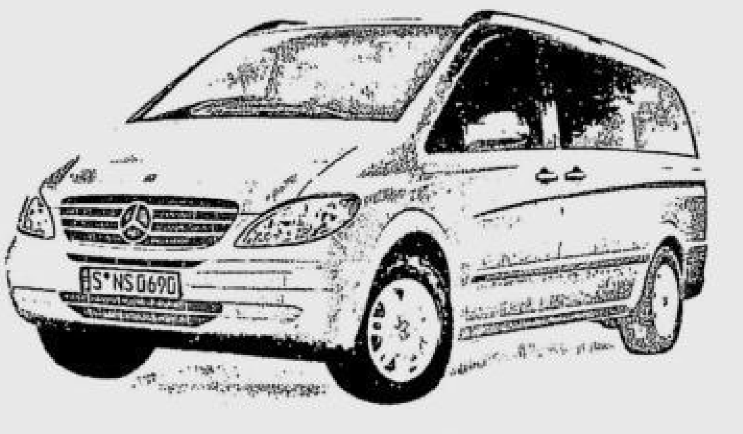

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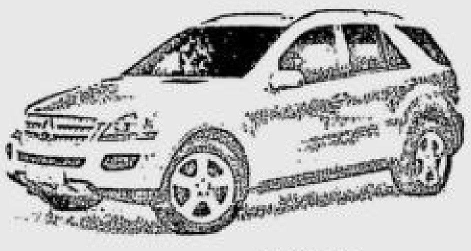

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Court OKs medical leave for Atong Ang

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS ALLOWED Charlie "Atong" Ang to leave his detention cell in Camp Bagong Diwa on Monday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. to undergo a medical examination at the Metropolitan Hospital in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

Ang, a former buddy of detained president Joseph Estrada, is suffering from persistent pedal edema or swelling on both legs and erratic hypertension in spite of medication, according to his doctor, Ruben Gaw Ki, who conducted a preliminary medical check-up on him inside the jail on Wednesday night as ordered by the antigraft court.

"When his doctor checked his blood pressure that night, it was 150/100," Ang's lawyer Ruth Castelo told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Sandiganbayan presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro yesterday ordered the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to ensure the security and safety of Ang during the medical furlough.

Ang's present condition could be attributed to his deteriorating kidney problem and his doctor recommended that he undergo other laboratory tests.

The 10-hour medical furlough, the first time for Ang since he was detained at the Metro Manila District Jail in Nov. 2006, was granted after his counsel presented Gaw Ki before the justices in a hearing yesterday to certify Ang's sickness.

Gaw Ki was given three days from Monday to submit the results of Ang's medical exam to the court .

Castelo assured they would make a manifestation before the court should the medical exam go beyond the time allowed by the Sandiganbayan special division.

"But the doctor said he would make sure that the laboratory tests be finished by 5 p.m. on Monday," she said.

On Tuesday, Ang through Castelo asked the Sandiganbayan that he be allowed to undergo medical check-up, citing a medical certificate issued by the jail's resident nurse stating that Ang was suffering glomulonephritis, an inflammation of the kidneys' capillaries.

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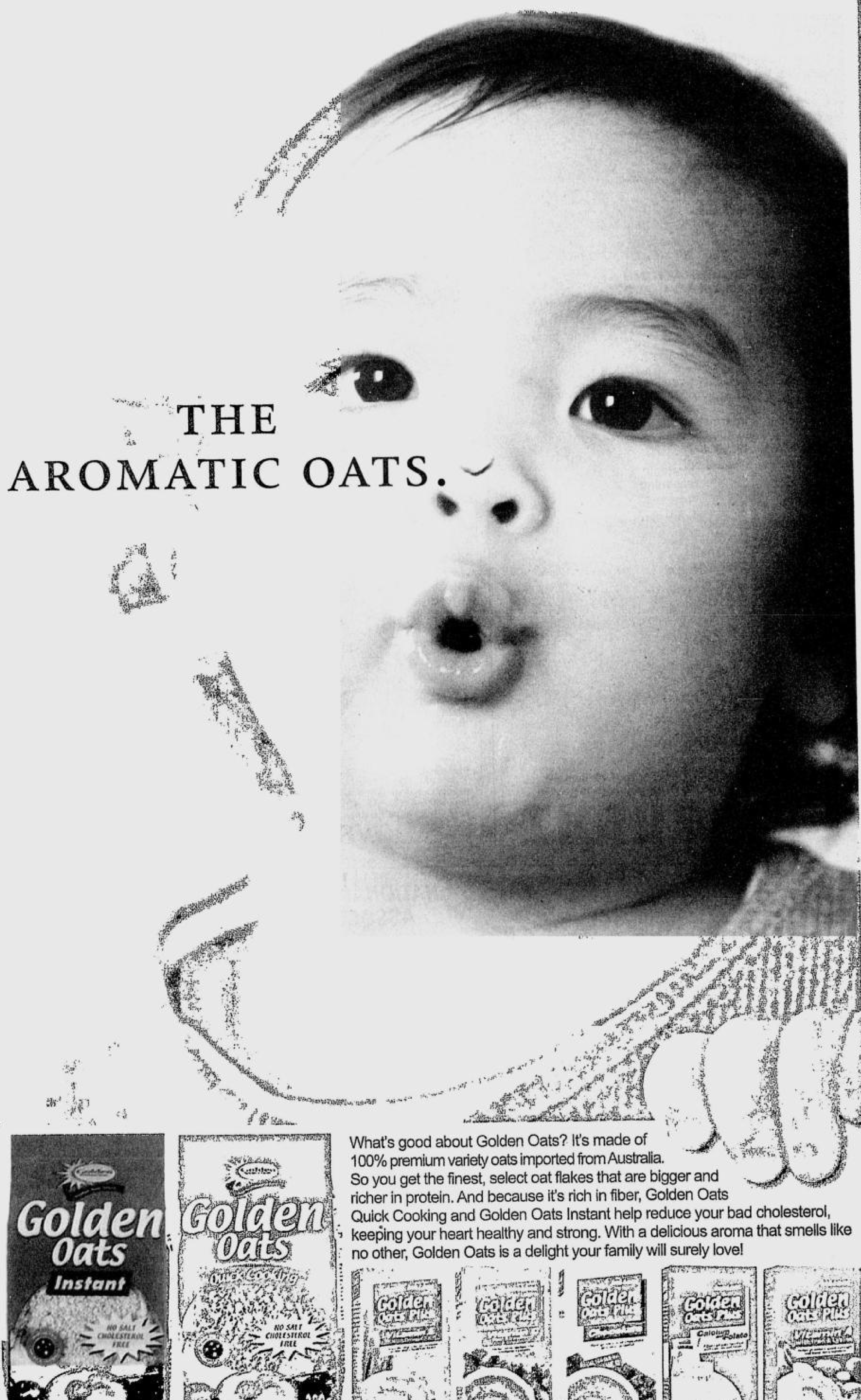
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Boracay demolition inevitable, says tourism chief

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BORACAY, AKLAN—DEMOLITIONS will be all but inevitable in this resort island with Tourism Secretary Ace Durano's announcement yesterday that a new master plan to rehabilitate the "overdeveloped" tourist destination is nearing completion.

But Durano assured resort operators that the new master plan would "consider existing developments."

The local provincial and local councils also have to adopt it before it can be enforced.

Demolishing large areas, with all the development already in place, would be impossible, Durano said.

"We will consider what is on the island now and we will find the best zoning strategy for the existing status," he said.

Several attempts by authorities to demolish certain structures in order to implement laws on road setbacks and easements from the beach front have been met with stiff opposition from some influential resort owners.

Wider roads

The new master plan will involve widening of the roads and installation of a drainage system.

Durano said the volume of commerce here had not been anticipated when basic infrastructure projects, like water and sewerage systems and road networks, were first built.

But while the growth in tourism has been good for the local economy, the rapid mushrooming of shops, bars and resorts is already threatening the future of the island, said Glenn Sacapaño, the chair of Balabag, one of three barangay here.

"If more and more establishments are put up here, there will be no more open spaces left. We will lose Boracay," said Sacapaño, 51, a Boracay native.

He said that as early as 1990, the government already drew up a master plan for the island but as it was left to the local government to implement it, it was never followed.

Master plan

The difference this time is that the new master plan included inputs from stakeholders, Durano told a group of business owners here.

He said it would be completed within the month by an architect that the tourism department has commissioned and presented to businessmen, residents and barangay leaders in the next few weeks.

The number of local and foreign tourists who visited the island grew from 499,457 in 2005 to 556,000 in 2006, according to the tourism office here.

In the meantime, rehabilitation will focus on managing the trash.

According to Sacapaño, new hotel constructions have increased the population of workers on the island. More people means more trash, he said.

The trash management and recovery facilities that the DOT put up were damaged by Typhoon Seniang last year. Durano yesterday personally turned over the funds needed to rehabilitate them to the Boracay Chamber of Commerce Inc.

The DOT gave P837,319 for the repair of the facilities and jump-start a food preparation training course. It has pledged to give another P179,100 later to sustain the training until July.

Take it off

Meanwhile, the head of the Task Force Bantay Boracay here has assured topless sunbathers they will have all the privacy they want as he would clear the beach front of motor boats.

"The number of topless sunbathers here has dwindled over the years apparently because the beach front has been getting more and more crowded," said Senior Supt. Benigno Durana.

With the renewed implementation of the "one entry, one exit" policy for ferry services, he said tourists can go naked if they want without having to worry about being stared at.

Under the policy, boats can only dock from the Caticlan jetty port to Cagban jetty port. Before, boats could dock at any point in the 4 km-long beach front to unload tourists.

The clearing of the beach front will give tourists a clearer view of the sunset as well as improve security as entry will be easily monitored, according to Durano.

Violators will be fined P3,000 on the first offense, P4,000 on the second, and suffer a cancellation of their permit to operate on the third offense.

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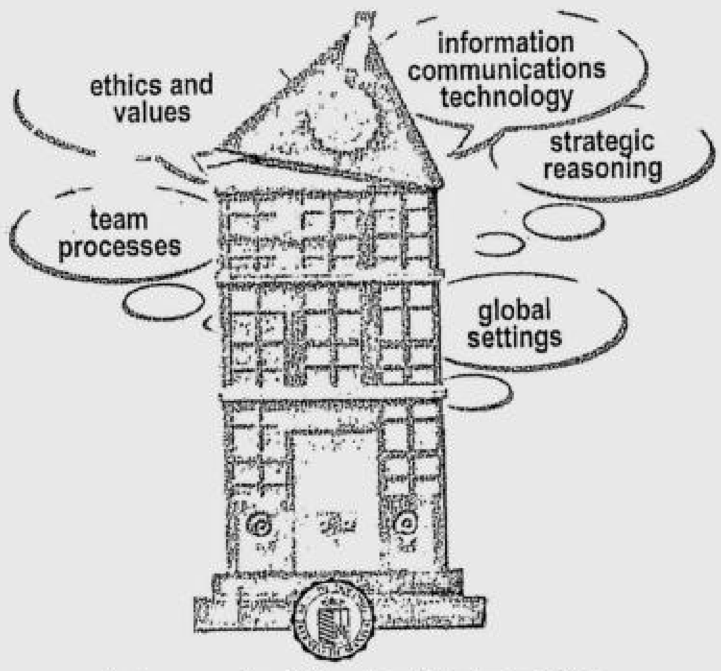

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SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 2 issue, a front-page story—"Docs say political medical missions dangerous to health"—misstated that faculty members of the University of the Philippines College of Public Health started the Give Kare Foundation (GKare). GKare, which manages the Gawad Kalusugan (GKal) program of Gawad Kalinga, was founded by members of Couples for Christ.

* * *

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a front-page story—"Loren OK at No. 2 but cites poll Kiko at No. 3"—misstated that Sen. Francis Pangilinan, who is seeking reelection, placed third in a Social Weather Stations survey on senatorial candidates. Pangilinan actually topped the latest SWS survey. He is reported to have placed third in a confidential survey supposedly conducted by a US pollster commissioned by Malacañang.

* * *

IN THE SAME issue, a story on Page A17 of the Metro section—"Pandacan barangay to stand firm on oil depot closure"—implied mistakenly that Chevron Corp. was affiliated with oil company Petron. Chevron is the parent company of Caltex.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 24 issue, the caption of a photo on Page A30 of the Sports section, which accompanied the story "Many players are big, talented but don't use their brains–Cezar," identified erroneously a former basketball player. The person former Crispa and Great Taste player Philip Cezar was trying to block is Samboy Lim—not Ramon Fernandez—of the San Miguel Beer Team.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, March 10, 2007
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Mic 7:14-15, 18-20
Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Tax collectors and sinners were seeking the company of Jesus, all of them eager to hear what he had to say. But the Pharisees and the scribes frowned at this, muttering. "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." So Jesus told them this parable: "There was a man with two sons. The younger said to his father: 'Give me my share of the estate.' So the father divided his property between them.

"Some days later, the younger son gathered all his belongings and started off for a distant land where he squandered his wealth in loose living. Having spent everything, he was hard pressed when a severe famine broke out in that land. So he hired himself out to a well-to-do citizen of that place and was sent to work on a pig farm. So famished was he that he longed to fill his stomach even with the food given to the pigs, but no one offered him anything. Finally coming to his senses, he said: 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will get up and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against God and before you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Treat me then as one of your hired servants.' With that thought in mind he set off for his father's house."

"He was still a long way off when his father caught sight of him. His father was so deeply moved with compassion that he ran out to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. The son said: 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you. I no longer deserve to be called your son...' But the father turned to his servants: 'Quick! Bring out the finest robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and kill it. We shall celebrate and have a feast, for this son of mine was dead and has come back to life. He was lost and is found.' And the celebration began. Meanwhile, the elder son had been working in the fields. As he returned and was near the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what it was all about. The servant answered: 'Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father is so happy about it that he has ordered this celebration and killed the fattened calf.'

"The elder son became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and pleaded with him. The indignant son said: 'Look, I have slaved for you all these years. Never have I disobeyed your orders. Yet you have never given me even a young goat to celebrate with my friends. Then when this son of yours returns after squandering your property with loose women, you kill the fattened calf for him.'

"The father said: 'My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But this brother of yours was dead, and has come back to life. He was lost and is found. And for that we had to rejoice and be glad.'"

Commentary

Again the image of the shepherd who cares for the sheep, leading them out of bondage and into promise and pasture. Our God is so gracious, treating us with clemency, pardoning us and taking us as his remnant of a people. Will we ever learn? Jesus too goes after the remnant, those who have sinned and seek to come home and once again know the gracious faithfulness of God. He sits at table with public sinners—those who have failed the religious law, those shunned and excluded from the table/the temple by the self-righteous Pharisees/scribes. He tells the story of the lost sons, both of whom disregard their father and do not know of his great love for each/both of them.

One squanders it all and wants to come home to get something to fill his empty stomach. The other stays at home, resentful and angry, obeying his father outwardly but inwardly despising him and hating him for giving part of his inheritance to his brother. But the Father welcomes them both back, and seeks that they will sit at table together. It is the older self-righteous brother that is still lost and still dead. We too are part of that family, neither of us knowing God the Father and neither of us forgiving of the other. What are we going to do now that we've heard the story once again?

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Hands On volunteers rebuild Bicol town

From page A1

help rebuild Sto. Domingo, which was battered by heavy rains and partly buried in mud when Supertyphoon "Reming" struck on Nov. 30, killing 55.

They are all members of Hands On Disaster Response (HODR), a US-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to disaster response and relief.

Community building

"What we try to do here is provide the community something that they need. It might not be as high in their list of things to repair, but by repairing it, you're helping them regain their sense of community," HODR operations director Marc Young, 46, told the INQUIRER.

"It's more of community building," said the landscaper and diving instructor from Michigan.

The HODR found the right place in Sto. Domingo, a municipality off Albay Gulf that continues to grapple with the after-effects of Reming.

Roads carved in half are still unpaved. The thick lahar that flowed down Mayon's slopes and obliterated villages, buried houses and green rice fields has yet to be cleared. Some houses and classrooms need roofs, and damaged fishing boats remain idle.

Nights are pitch-black in many barangays because power has yet to be restored.

"We try to find an area where we can have a big impact," Young said, observing that Sto. Domingo had gotten less attention than its neighbors. "We don't have the capability or funding to do large-scale projects. What we try to do is find projects where we can help numbers of people."

Shoveling lahar

The first HODR team set up a center in a two-story house in San Isidro, the first barangay from the national highway, within a week after the disaster.

The volunteers have since fanned out across the town to dig out houses, roads and drainage pipes, nail tarps and GI sheets on the roofs of houses and schools, build partitions in classrooms, repair water pumps, and buy materials to fix damaged boats.

Residents who lost their farms and boats have benefited mostly from the lahar-shoveling project. They stay in their dug-out houses while awaiting relocation, and sell lahar as construction material at P700 to P800 per truckload.

"They have helped a lot of people here. I doubt if we can get the same help from Filipinos who are more interested in politics," Joel Buen, 47, said as he watched the foreign volunteers shovel lahar from the sides of his house in San Isidro.

The HODR, which is mostly funded by private donors, has lined up lahar-shoveling, reroofing and boat-building projects in other barangays between now and March 31, its last day of work in Sto. Domingo.

Daycare center

The paint job on the classroom in Barangay San Fernando that had been turned into a daycare center by the Department of Social Welfare and Development was just a finishing touch.

On that day, March 3, the volunteers, including Bito who is a Filipino, got help from Hands On Manila staff led by its president Gianna Montinola, Peace Corps volunteer Julia Campbell who is based in Legazpi City, and some schoolboys who were thrilled to work with them.

Days earlier, the volunteers nailed a new tin sheet to replace the rusty roof that had been blown off, installed bamboo slats on the window frames, and, with the help of preschoolers, painted the walls inside in blue and white.

The daycare center opened on Feb. 5, to the delight of the 76 preschoolers, their two teachers and barangay officials.

"Funds for the repair were hard to come by. Thanks to Hands On, we now have classes," teacher Cheryl Banares, 44, said as she laid out the lunch she and her neighbors had prepared for the volunteers.

Beginnings

The HODR took shape in Thailand after the deadly tsunami in December 2004.

A group of American volunteers, including Young, decided to band together after months of building shelters for the survivors—and never looked back.

The ensuing months saw ever growing numbers of volunteers taking up their backpacks and flying to scenes of disaster—Louisiana in the aftermath of Hurricane "Katrina" in 2005, Indonesia after an earthquake in 2006 and now, Albay.

For some volunteers accustomed to cold weather, shoveling lahar or doing carpentry under the blazing sun is a tough experience.

Canadian broadcasting graduate Kondratoff said she had to adjust to the heat and work at the same time.

"This is the hottest I've ever been in my life. In our place, the warmest is 20 degrees Celsius," said Kondratoff, 22, as she waited for her turn at the shower. "The physical work was tough. But I'm now used to it."

Said the Irish banker Lacy, 35: "It's much harder in Indonesia, where we had to shovel bricks into sacks, and carry them."

The volunteers live in spartan conditions in their rented two-story house.

After work six days a week, they pump water for their own use and take a shower in a bathroom inside or in a two-door makeshift booth on the front lawn.

At 10 p.m., they have to be in bed in either of the two rooms, or on the porch in the upper floor, because that's when the generator is turned off. They get up at 7 a.m.

No complaints

But nobody's complaining.

"The hardest part for me is having to tell someone that we can't help them," Young said when asked about the toughest part of the job.

He recalled rejecting some requests because these would serve only a family, and not a community.

At the time of the INQUIRER visit, the contingent of around 15 volunteers from the United States, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Cameroon (their number varies because some leave and new ones fly in), appeared to be getting by, thanks to the community's cheerful support.

At the work sites, it is not uncommon for boys and girls to turn up, pick up a paint brush or a shovel, or haul off a lahar-filled wheelbarrow.

But what gives the volunteers a kick is the sight of neighborhood kids waving and calling out their names as they trudge home in their grimy Hands On T-shirts and muddied boots after a hard day's work.

"You walk down the street, and you're like a rock star. The people just love the fact that we're here from all over the world to help them in their community. The rewards are just massive," Young said.

Of the volunteers, Fombi, 33, a stocky electrical engineer from Cameroon who worked in Darfur last year delivering boxes of medicine to communities, is the most popular. He is seen exchanging high fives with children everywhere he goes.

"The kids called him Michael Jordan—until they saw him play," Kondratoff said, laughing.

PLAYTIME: Hands On Disaster Response volunteer Tim Fudge from England who's here to help rebuild the coastal town of Sto. Domingo, Albay, takes time to have fun with the children of Barangay Isidro on the way to yet another site to provide aid, comfort and cheer.

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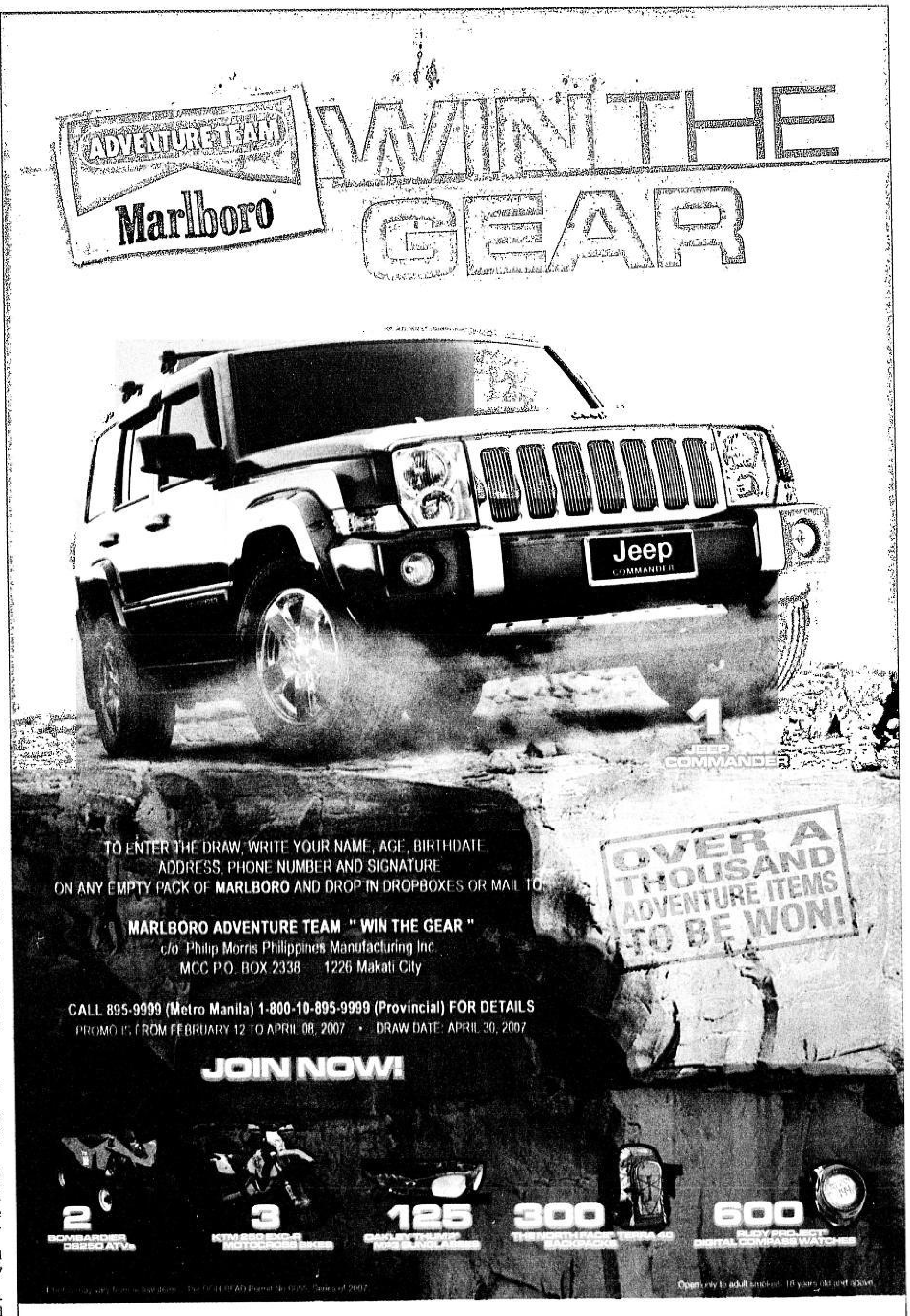

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RP oil worker freed but Pinay not kidnapped

From page A1

napped in Nigeria a day after Helera's abduction, had in fact not been kidnapped.

He said the Arroyo administration had been informed that Helera was "well and in good condition" and would fly back to the Philippines after a security debriefing.

Helera was abducted on Feb. 6 while on his way to Owerri airport to catch a flight to Lagos. The gunmen were not identified.

"Today, 30 days later, I am pleased to report to you that Winston Helera was released yesterday. Winston is now in the clinic of the employer Shell Petroleum Development Corp. for a physical checkup," Conejos told a press conference.

He said that the Nigerian government and Helera's employer were the ones who negotiated with the kidnappers, and that no ransom was paid.

Helera's wife Anna and 76-year-old mother Nordeliza were at the press conference, flanked by his two daughters and his brother Mario.

"I am thankful to our government for ensuring my son's safe release. We have been fearing for his safety for so long," a tearful Nordeliza told reporters in Filipino.

Foroozan is a native of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. Her Iranian husband, Manouch Foroozan, general manager of Shahpar International Co. Ltd., reported her supposed abduction to the Nigerian police and the Philippine Embassy in Abuja on Feb. 7.

But Conejos cited flight records showing that the woman boarded a commercial flight from Lagos to Frankfurt on Feb. 6, and immigration records showing that she disembarked from an international flight at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Feb. 10.

"She was included in the Lufthansa passenger manifest for Feb. 6, and that plane was bound for Frankfurt, Germany, from Lagos," Conejos said.

"I have information that what happened was not a kidnapping," he said.

Conejos said the case had been referred to Department of Justice investigators. He refused to speculate on what had happened.

He also said the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labor and Employment would discuss the security situation in Nigeria to assess if the current deployment ban could be lifted, now that all kidnapping cases involving Filipinos have been resolved.

3,900 Filipinos

Last month, gunmen freed 24 other Filipino oil workers taken hostage in January aboard a vessel in southern Nigeria's oil-rich Delta State.

Following the kidnappings, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered a ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Nigeria.

Nigeria is one of the biggest employers of Filipino workers in Africa, with some 3,900 Filipinos employed there at the end of 2006.

The past year has seen an upsurge in violence by separatist groups seeking a greater share of Nigeria's oil wealth for the inhabitants of the Niger Delta.

Scores of foreigners, mostly in the oil sector, have been kidnapped and some 37 Nigerian soldiers and dozens of local oil workers killed.

Nigeria is Africa's largest oil producer and derives more than 95 percent of its foreign exchange earnings from the fossil fuel. *Reports from Julie M. Aurelio, AFP*

Quintos brods' pa: Solgen lawyering for Villarosa

From page A1

case? The manifestation is preemptive and telegraphic," Quintos said.

In a review of the case on Dec. 4, 2006, which came to light only last Friday, the OSG recommended to the Court of Appeals that Villarosa and the three others—Gelito Bautista, Ruben Balaguer and Mario Tobias—convicted for the murder be acquitted for insufficient evidence. The INQUIRER obtained the document from the Court of Appeals.

The OSG, which was headed at the time by Supreme Court Associate Justice Eduardo Nachura, said the prosecution had failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt the complicity of the four in the deaths of the Quintos brothers. But in making the recommendation, the OSG said it was not suggesting that they were innocent.

Quintos said he was pained by the news of the OSG recommendation although he said he and his wife had resolved from the beginning to detach themselves from the case.

Lawyering for accused

"It's tragic to belong to a corrupt generation ... is justice only for the rich and powerful? What about the impoverished people who have no connection and influence?" he said.

The OSG is mandated to protect and defend the people but it has resorted instead to "legal adventurism" and appeared to be lawyering for the accused, Quintos said.

Raise issue to SC

He said he would question the OSG's actions before the Supreme Court.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has explained that all cases on appeal are brought to the OSG for comment. He said the OSG was not obliged to accept the decision of the lower court.

According to the Administrative Code 1987 setting out the functions of the OSG, the Solicitor General can "act and represent the Republic/or the People before any court, tribunal, commission on any matter, action or proceedings which, in his opinion, affects the people as the ends of justice may require."

'Inadmissible confession'

The OSG, in its manifestation, said that the confessions of the farmer, Eduardo Hermoso, that implicated Villarosa and the others in the double murder was inadmissible as it was not done voluntarily and was made without the benefit of counsel.

Taped confession

Quintos disputed this, saying the taped confession of Hermoso at the National Bureau of Investigation would prove that he was "untouched" when he came out with the statements implicating Villarosa.

Hermoso had repudiated his confession in court, saying he was tortured into giving it.

"The lower court has already dismantled that [claim]. The defense could not prove that Hermoso was tortured, which is a lie," Quintos said.

Villarosa named

Quintos said the video of the confession showed Hermoso smiling, smoking and helping agents of the NBI arrange the documents of his affidavit.

The confessed gunman was also accompanied by his lawyer when he admitted that Villarosa and the other accused conspired in killing his two sons, Quintos said.

While it recommended the acquittal of Villarosa and three others, the OSG said the murder conviction of three remaining convicts should be affirmed.

Enough evidence to convict

The OSG said there was enough evidence to convict Hermoso, Josue Ungsod and Manolito Matricio despite the inadmissibility of Hermoso's extrajudicial confession that pointed to a conspiracy to kill Michael and Paul Quintos.

It said the testimonies of witnesses pointing to Hermoso, Ungsod and Matricio as those involved in the killing were reliable and trustworthy.

It also said the communist New People's Army claim of responsibility for the killings confirmed Matricio's involvement as another witness had linked the farmer to the rebel group.

Conspiracy

The conspiracy among Hermoso, Ungsod and Matricio to kill the Quintos brothers was also established, according to the government lawyers.

But the OSG recommended the downgrading of the penalty for the three from death to reclusion perpetua since the death penalty law has been repealed.

The OSG manifestation was signed Nachura, Assistant Solicitor General Roman Del Rosario, Solicitor Perpetua Guerrero and Associate Solicitor Latimer Cabanlas.

Bill Gates still richest; Indians top Japanese

From page A1

While the 20th annual list was dominated as usual by US businessmen, Russian oligarchs and Asian entrepreneurs—especially those from India and China—were increasingly making their presence felt.

3 from RP

Three from the Philippines made it to the list of billionaires in Asia: mall magnate Henry Sy, 82, and real estate tycoon Jaime Zobel de Ayala, 72, who are both ranked 349 on the list, and tobacco king Lucio Tan, 72, ranked 407.

Forbes put both Sy's and the Ayala's net worth at $2.6 billion each. Tan's fortune was placed at a more "modest" $2.3 billion.

Billionaire no more

Some 36 Indian billionaires led by steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal are now featured on the list, boasting a total wealth of $191 billion among them, knocking out the Japanese who have dominated the Asian billionaires' list for two decades.

Japanese businessman Yoshiaki Tsutsumi, whose real estate assets once made him the richest man in the world, slid off the list all together, with Softbank chief Masayoshi Son taking the top Japanese spot with $5.8 billion.

But even India's dominance would be overturned if China and Hong Kong were lumped together with their total of 41 billionaires, led respectively by Hong Kong property magnate Li Kashing and China's paper manufacturer Yan Cheung.

South Korea also did well, adding seven names this year, with Samsung Chairman Lee Kun-hee leading the list over Hyundai chief Chung Mong-koo, who was sentenced to three years in prison over a slush fund scandal last month.

'Sizzling year' for Asia

Elsewhere in the Asia-Pacific region, Australia had 12 billionaires led by media magnate James Packer, while Malaysia had nine, Taiwan eight, Singapore four, Thailand three and Indonesia two.

"It was a sizzling year in Asia. Both India and China saw huge gains," said Forbes associate editor Luisa Kroll, who oversaw the report. "It seems we just can't get away from billionaires."

The list's total net worth grew 35 percent from last year to a staggering $3.5 trillion, with Mexican telecoms mogul Carlos Slim Helu jumping into third place with a massive $19-billion increase in his net worth.

"This growth in the billionaires list is a mere reflection of a dynamic global economy. More people are better off on this Earth than ever before," said Steve Forbes, the magazine's editor in chief.

"This boom goes beyond commodities. One of the things that has facilitated this global boom, bringing hundreds of millions of people into the global economy is, of course, technology," he added.

'Richest year' in history

"This is the richest year in human history."

In Europe, the most excitement came from Russia and Spain, Kroll explained, with 10 new Spanish names on the list and 19 Russian newcomers.

"The Russians are, on average, 46 years old. That's 16 years younger than the average 62-year-old billionaires," she said.

Forbes, however, urged some caution, saying some of the fortunes in the former Soviet Union did not appear sustainable in the long term.

"If there is a fall-off of commodity prices ... does it have the breadth and depth to take up the slack?" he asked of the Russian economy.

Oil kingpin and Chelsea football club owner Roman Abramovich remained the top dog in Russia with $18.7 billion, with his 52 billionaire countrymen owing their fortunes mainly to oil, steel, mining and metals.

Richest woman

The richest woman on the list was Liliane Bettencourt, 84, of France, the daughter of L'Oreal founder Eugene Schueller, who ranked at number 12 with $20.7 billion.

The youngest billionaire is a German, Albert von Thurn Und Taxis, only 23 years old, who inherited his wealth that includes 30,000 hectares of woodland. He still lives with his mother and older sisters in a family castle in Regensburg.

Another of the youngest billionaires is entirely self-made, China's William Ding, 36, who started his company, NetEase, as an Internet portal and then shifted the focus to online gaming.

In the Middle East, Turkey emerged with the most billionaires, beating Saudi Arabia into second place and Israel into third.

Starbucks power

Howard Schultz of Starbucks was a new entrant to the list. Former Disney chief Michael Eisner also made his debut, thanks mostly to his rising stock in the company.

Other familiar faces were Google executives Larry Page and Sergey Brin, now worth $16.6 billion each, Dell founder Michael Dell worth $15.8 billion and former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi with $11.8 billion.

Google's rise was emblematic of the rapid growth in fortunes of more than just a handful of entrepreneurs in recent years.

"In the last five years ... despite all the turmoil in the world, all the conflict in the world, the global economy in real terms expanded over 25 percent. Never in history has there been such an advance," said Steve Forbes. *AFP*

For better memory, stop, smell the roses

From page A1

Germany and colleagues had 74 volunteers learn to play games similar to the game of "Concentration" in which they must find matched pairs of objects or cards by turning only one over at a time.

While doing this task, some of the volunteers inhaled the scent of roses. The volunteers then agreed to sleep inside an MRI tube. Functional magnetic resonance imaging was used to "watch" their brains while they slept.

At various stages during sleep, Born's team wafted in the same scent of roses.

The volunteers were tested again the next day on what they had learned. "After the odor night, participants remembered 97.2 percent of the card pairs they had learned before sleep," the researchers wrote.

But they only remembered 86 percent of the pairs if they did not get the rose smell while sleeping.

Sleep 'learning'

And the stage of sleep was important too, the researchers said in a finding that will add to the debate over whether people "learn" in their sleep the way some animals have been shown to.

Research has shown, for example, that rats learning a new maze will rehearse their movements during sleep, and that songbirds rehearse their songs.

Born's team said the scent improved learning when it was administered during slow-wave sleep, but had no effect during rapid eye movement or REM sleep.

The MRI showed that the hippocampus, the part of the brain associated with learning new things, was activated when the odor was wafted over the volunteers during slow wave sleep. *Reuters*

Rich man, poor man share bottom rung in survey

From page A1

million spent in the campaign's first two weeks on television advertisements alone got Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, who is running in the administration's Team Unity and is considered one of the richest of the current crop of senatorial aspirants.

Not too far from Pichay in the rankings of the SWS survey released last Wednesday is Dr. Martin Bautista, one of only three bets of Ang Kapatiran, a political party put up by a group of Catholic and Christian professionals three years ago.

At 29th place, Bautista even bested Pichay's fellow Team Unity bet Jamalul Kiram who ranked between 30 and 33 along with another obscure candidate named Vicente Villanueva.

'Money isn't everything'

Though he's still too far away from the Magic 12, placing in the top 30 is already some kind of moral victory for Bautista.

"I think it goes to show that money isn't everything in an election," he said.

Based on the published figures (number of registered voters, voter turnout in 2004, target number of voters, the candidates' stated expenses) and Pichay's and Bautista's percentages in the SWS' Feb. 24 to 27 survey, the INQUIRER calculated that Pichay has spent P8.33 and Bautista 0.02 centavos for each voter as of Feb. 27.

Bautista and his fellow Kapatiran candidates Zosimo Paredes and Adrian Sison are advancing the party's vision of bringing God into the center of Philippine politics. By this they mean the opposite of how politics has long been viewed here, one that's driven by ambition, power, influence and money.

Three weeks into the campaign, Bautista said he has spent about P18,000 out of his own pocket. The party gave P100,000, which he said came from individual contributions.

"It's difficult to spend money that you worked very hard for," said Bautista, who was a gastroenterologist for 17 years in the United States before returning to the Philippines last year.

P1.3-M kitty

The party has spent a total of P1.05 million from Dec. 19, 2006 to March 8, according to Kapatiran treasurer Rene H. Peronilla, a retired bank executive. He said it still had P300,000 in its bank account.

The P1,347,569.25 that Kapatiran raised during that three-month period is easily dwarfed by the campaign kitties of Team Unity and the Genuine Opposition.

Administration candidate Sen. Ralph Recto has said that candidates are each allowed to spend P120 million for the campaign. Pichay said the party is allowed to throw in an additional P80 million for each candidate.

In the first two weeks of the campaign, Pichay spent P33 million in TV ads. Next to him came reelectionist Sen. Manuel Villar who spent P30.29 million and Recto with P22.79 million, according to the Nielsen Media Research Phils.

Despite the overwhelming disparity in resources, Bautista said the Kapatiran candidates were banking on other means to introduce themselves to the public.

Party founder Nandy Pacheco earlier noted the importance of "word of mouth" in promoting Kapatiran's advocacy.

The party's campaign strategy has apparently been so effective that it has attracted an independent senatorial candidate, actor Richard Gomez.

Meeting with Goma

Gomez met late Wednesday with Bautista, Paredes and Sison, asking if he could join their sorties, according to a Kapatiran member who was privy to the meeting in a Quezon City restaurant.

"I think he might be accommodated once or twice but I'm not sure if he would fit the advocacy of Kapatiran," the source said on condition of anonymity because he said he was not authorized to speak on the matter.

"While the party is against traditional politicians, it also doesn't embrace actors in politics," the source said.

During the meeting, Gomez is said to have admitted that he could not sustain his solo-flight campaign, noting that he once spent half a million pesos in just one day. The amount bought him five 30-second TV ads.

Asked if he was actually planning to sign up with the party, Gomez reportedly replied: "Problem is I took an oath with the Nationalist People's Coalition."

The source said Gomez appeared to be unhappy with the NPC which does not seem to be supporting his candidacy but that of opposition candidate Loren Legarda.

Unlike other candidates who have been focusing on media ads, Kapatiran bets favor a more personal approach, discussing their platform with people on the streets.

Bautista said they have also adopted a simple strategy to deal with people asking for money during sorties, a practice that the Kapatiran wants to eradicate.

At a campaign sortie in Divisoria on Thursday, the doctor was approached by a middle-aged woman who asked him for money to buy medicine for a relative.

Another woman in her 30s, with a child in tow, also asked for money, saying: "I need to go home to Samar so I can vote."

Bautista politely declined, explaining in Filipino: "You know very well that I have nothing to give you. And if I did, you ought to think about how I will get that money back in the future."

Both women turned away. Bautista knew he had just lost two votes, his price for turning his back on "*trapo*" politics.

Cayetano seeks out namesake in Davao

By Norman Bordadora

DAVAO CITY—GENuine Opposition candidate Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Cayetano yesterday took his campaign right at the doorstep of his namesake Joselito Pepito Cayetano in a slum community in this city with an intention to meet the latter but failed.

"I went to Joselito Cayetano's place in Sasa Wharf to meet him. But his neighbors told me, 'Alan, you just missed him. He just went to Malacañang to meet FG!'" Alan told the crowd that gathered before GO's Mindanao kick-off rally in this city on Thursday night.

Cayetano has incurred the ire of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo because of his exposes against the First Family.

But Cayetano met Joselito's 74-year-old mother, Conrada, in one of the alleys of Barangay Parola Sasa and told her he doesn't hold a grudge against the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan senatorial candidate said to have been tapped to undermine his chances at the polls.

"(I told her) I'm not upset with Joselito. I'm upset with those who are dictating his actions," Cayetano said in a statement.

He added that he now even considers both Conrada and Joselito as distant relatives.

"I will now give you my calling card so that even if the elections are over, we can treat each other as relatives," Cayetano told Conrada.

Nestor, Joselito's younger brother, said an aunt once told him that she met former Sen. Rene Cayetano during a family reunion in Leyte. "My aunt said we could be related," Nestor said.

"I must admit that I myself was shocked to learn that he was running as senator," Nestor said.

As this developed, a former mayor of Pateros yesterday sought the disqualification of Cayetano, alleging the lawmaker is an American citizen.

Jose Capco Jr. asked the Comelec to cancel the certificate of candidacy of Cayetano.

Cayetano's mother, Sandra Lee Schramm, is an American, Capco pointed out.

Meanwhile, Genuine Opposition campaign manager JV Ejercito accused Malacañang of using public funds for the campaign of administration bets.

He said this is evidenced by Team Unity's lavish sorties.

"They use the car and the fuel of the government which comes from our money," he said.

Estrada said the meals and other needs of Team Unity volunteers and other persons partaking in the campaign are also charged to the funds of the government.

Rep. Francis Escudero said Malacañang should explain where the money for Team Unity was coming from.

With a report from Dennis Santos and Rizalene Acac, Inquirer Mindanao and Nikko Dizon

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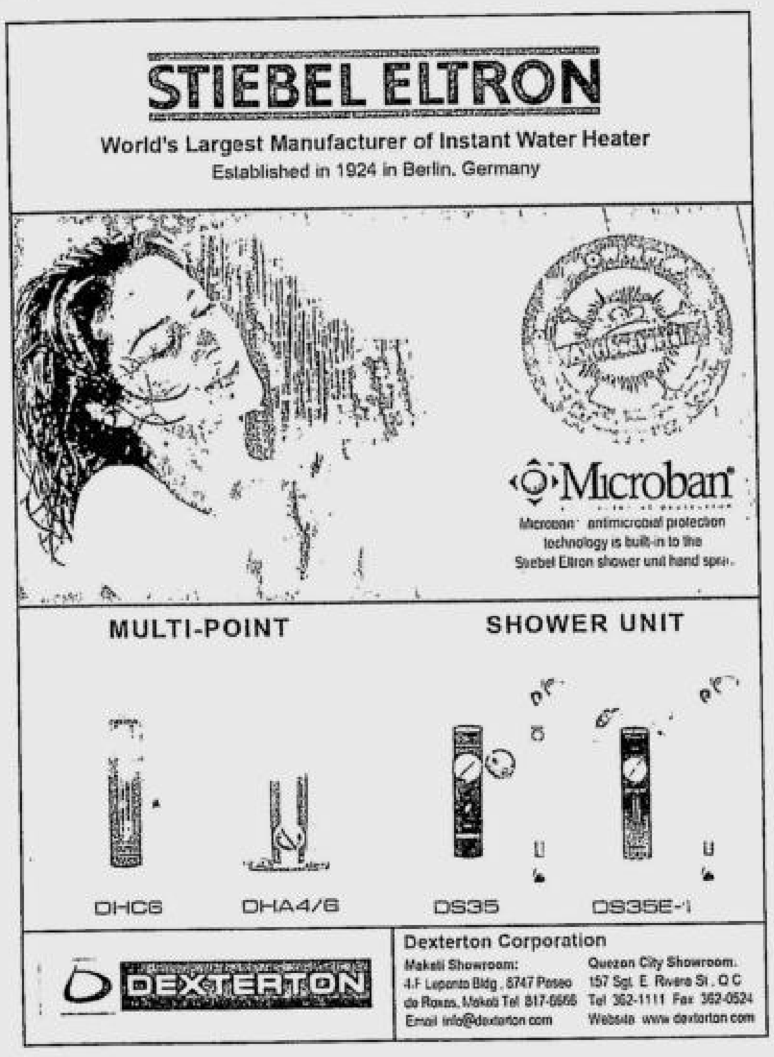
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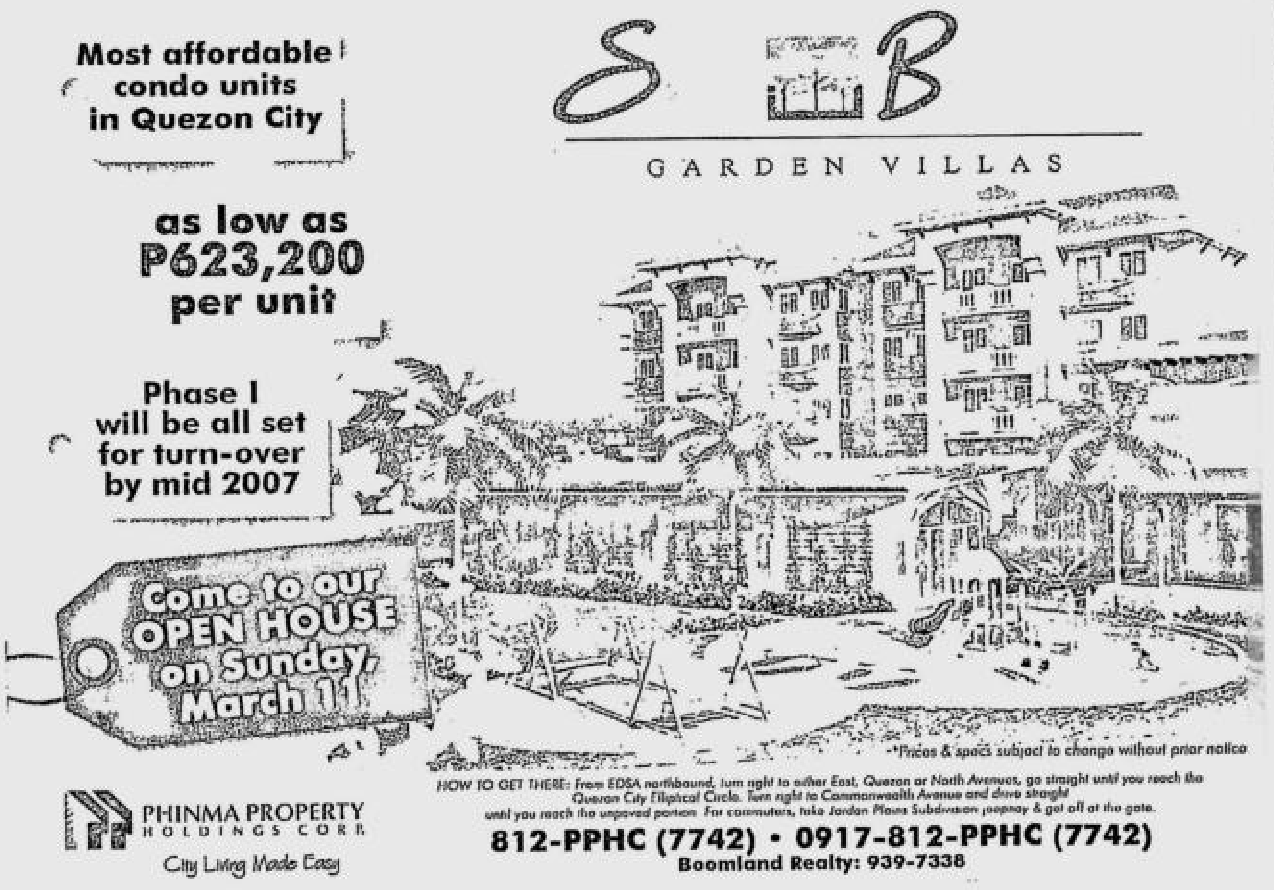
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Region XII
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
Kidapawan City

February 14, 2007

Notice of Coverage

The following landholdings in the province of Cotabato, the landowners of which are considered absentee, are covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP):

Land Owners	Title No.	Lot & Survey No.	Area	Location
1. Heracleo Suguilon	P-45627	84, Pls-715	9.9799	Meocan, Arakan
2. Sixto Fajardo	T-59711	47, Pls-715	5.0063	Malibatuan, Ara.
3. Sixto Fajardo	T-8641	131 Bsd-20417	2.8647	Salvacion, Ara.
4. Samson Cezar	P-51430	351, Pls-715	9.9885	Malibatuan, Ara.
5. Alejandro Cezar	P-51428	352, Pls-715	7.4935	Malibatuan, Ara.
6. Protacio Chavez	P-40060	179, Pls-826	9.0619	Badiangan, Ara.
7. Abdon Lepiten	P-25223	6760, Pls-59	71.1034	Labu-o, P. Roxas
8. Bernabe Barrios	T-69574	159, Pls-556	9.9994	Tibao, Mlang
9. Bernabe Barrios	P-38546	283, Bsd-20417	4.4323	Kamarahan, Roxas
10. Bernabe Barrios	T-54087	2285-A, Psd-12-000292	5.0127	Buluan, P. Roxas
11. Bernabe Barrios	T-63102	164, Bsd-20417	4.7003	Salvacion, P. Roxas
12. Bernabe Barrios	T-65391	237-B, Psd-168712	3.9037	Kamarahan, P. Roxas
13. Justiniano Barrios	V-7432	124, Bsd-20419	4.7912	Amas, Kid. City
14. Justiniano Barrios	P-52340	C, Ces-12-0000009-D	2.9779	Gayola, Kid. City

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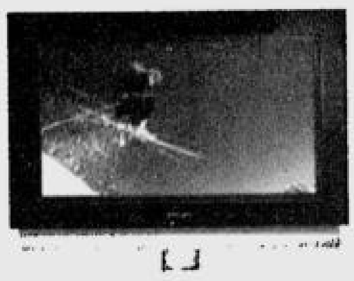

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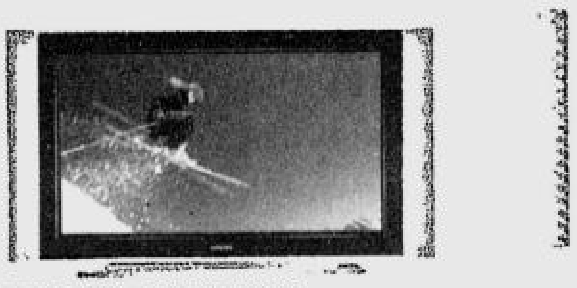

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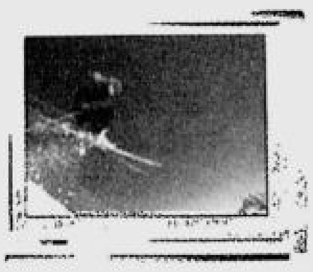

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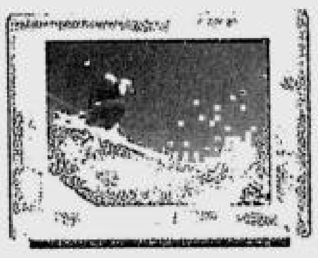

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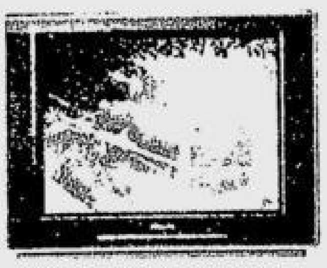

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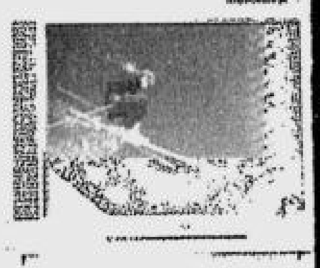

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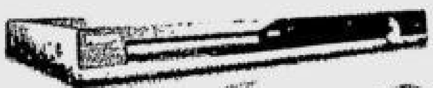

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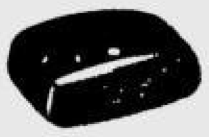

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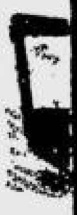
Clock Radio



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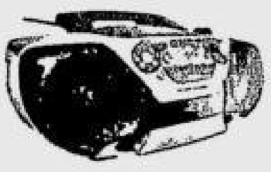

AZ5737 PHP5,990.00
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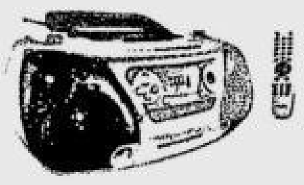

AZ5140 PHP3,990.00
Portable VCD/MP3

AZ1836 PHP4,990.00
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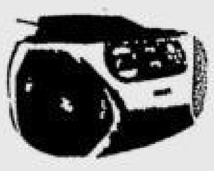
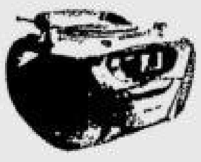
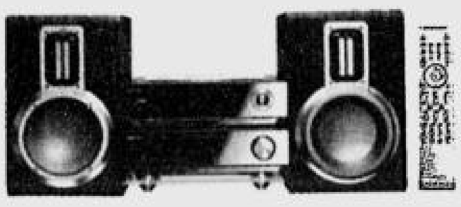


AZ1017 PHP2,990.00
Portable CD Sound machine



AZ1016 PHP1,990.00
Portable CD Sound machine



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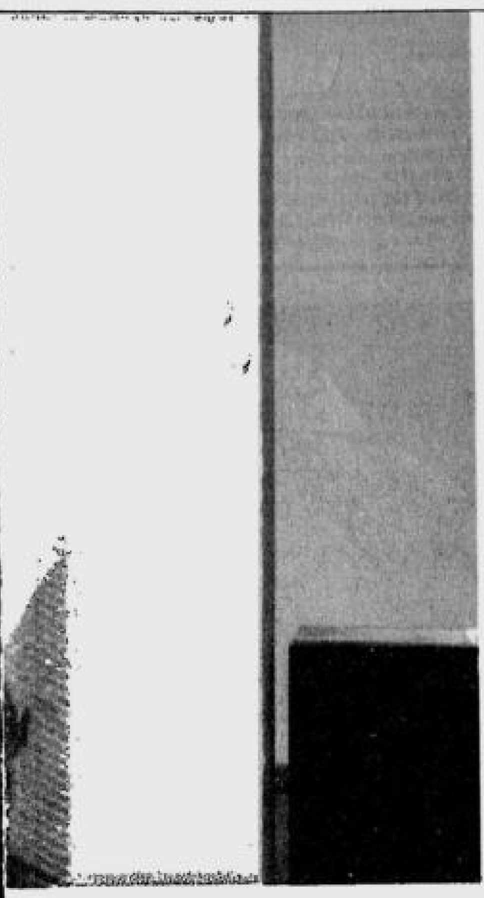

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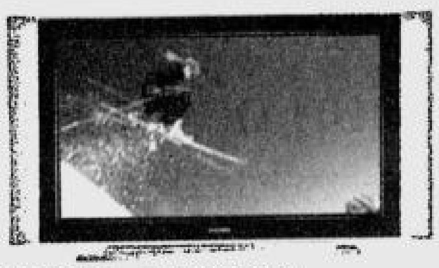

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93.98cm (37") LCDTV with Pixel Plus
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Option 1 - Cash **FREE P10,000 GC**
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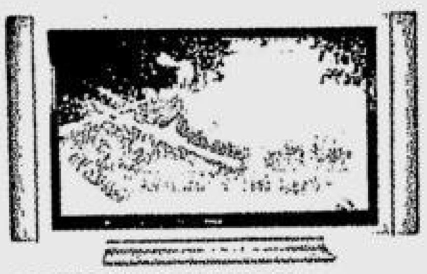

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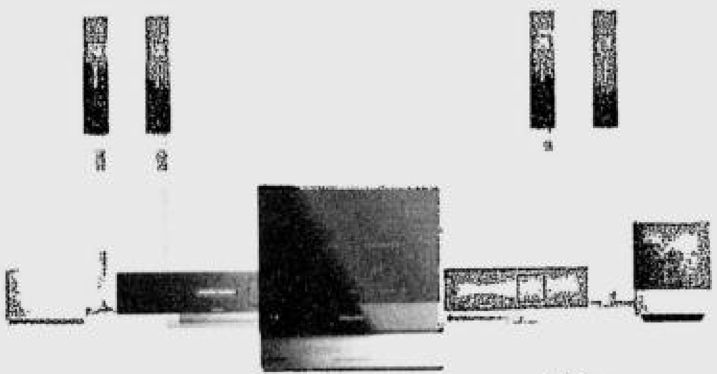

HTS9800 PHP56,990.00
Home Theater System with 6.1 Dolby Digital EX, HDMI, Wireless rear speakers
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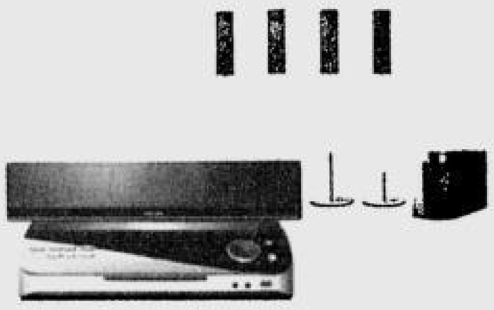

HTS4750 PHP26,990.00
Home Theater System with HDMI, DTS, Dolby Digital and Pro Logic II, Karaoke
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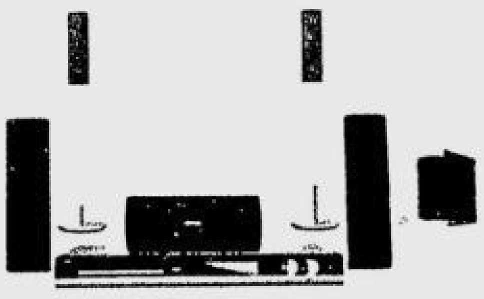

HTS3110 PHP16,990.00
Home Theater System with DTS, Dolby Digital and Pro Logic II, Karaoke
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PET725 PHP12,990.00
Portable DVD Player
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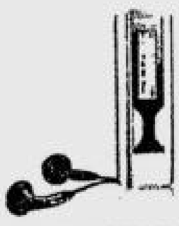

SA1105 PHP2,990.00
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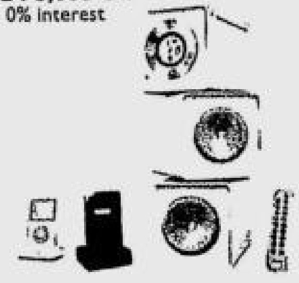
512MB Flash Audio Player



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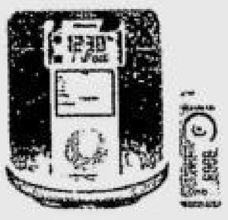

AJ300D PHP4,990.00
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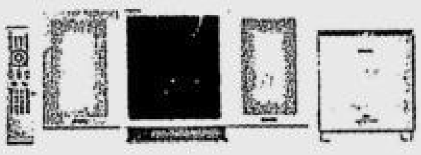

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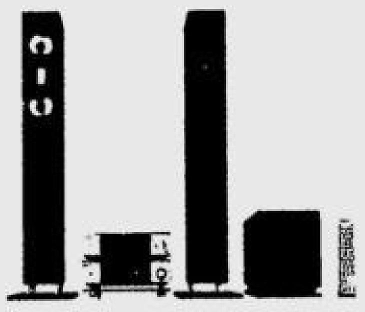

MCD 709 PHP 36,980
DVD Micro Theatre with Neodymium Ribbon Tweeters
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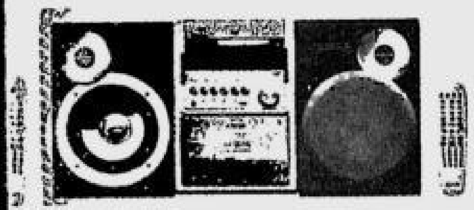

MCD 515 PHP 11,990
DVD Micro Theatre With DivX Playback
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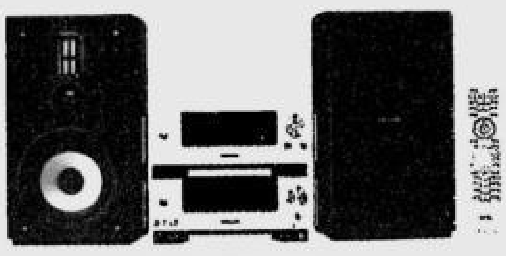
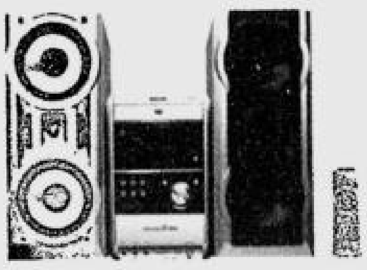


MCD 908 PHP38,980
DVD Micro Theatre With DivX Playback
Option 1 – Cash **FREE PHP2,000 GC**
Option 2 – 12 Months 0% Interest



FWD832PHP14,990
Mini Max with 3-way Speaker System
Option 1 – Cash **FREE PHP1,000 GC**
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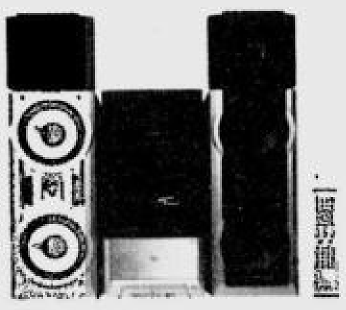
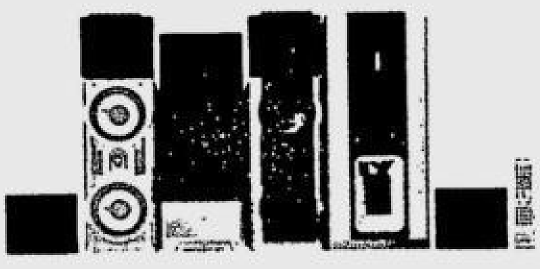


FWD872 PHP18,990
Mini Max with Max Sound and 3-step DBB
Option 1 – Cash **FREE PHP1,500 GC**
Option 2 – 12 Months 0% Interest



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OPINION

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Judicial will

EDITORIAL

IT TOOK THE SUPREME COURT TO TELL THE CITY of Manila and the oil companies to stop malingering and obey the law. The law in this case being a city ordinance reclassifying the Pandacan oil depot property from an industrial to a commercial zone. The main reason for the 2002 reclassification was security. The depot is in the heart of Manila, in close proximity to Malacañang Palace and a major light railway station, an important bridge, and so on.

When Manila's city council passed the ordinance, the Big Three oil companies—Petron, Shell and Caltex—cried foul and started muttering about the gigantic costs that would have to be passed on to consumers. The result was a kind of negotiated settlement brokered by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza. The oil companies promised to tighten security and start trimming down the size of their facilities.

The Supreme Court decided that the Manila mayor's memorandum of understanding was valid only until 2003, and that focusing on it shouldn't muddle things. The city council's ordinance not only stands, but is enforceable within six months after the Court issued its ruling.

The oil companies are naturally unhappy with the decision, and are mulling over their options. Since the Pandacan oil depot is the source for 82 percent of Metro Manila's oil fuel needs and half of Luzon's, transferring the depot elsewhere will be a major logistical challenge. But then again, the city ordinance was passed in 2001, the oil companies were given an additional grace period until 2003, and they have had four years to act since then and have precious little to show for it.

Shell, Petron and Caltex can choose to go to court and appeal for a reconsideration of the Supreme Court decision. That will buy them time. It isn't farfetched to think that if that option proves, legally or public relations-wise, unproductive, the oil companies will bellyache about expense. And start trying to frighten officials and the public by suggesting a dent in economic growth as the metropolis' oil needs might not be met.

The city council might then use the existence of the Human Security Act to revoke its reclassification of Pandacan, though such a bold attempt to circumvent the Supreme Court is unlikely. What's more likely is that the City of Manila and the national government are now faced with industrial and economic dislocations leading up to the September deadline set by the Court for the oil companies to transfer their depots.

The move can be done. And it should be done. The need to transfer the Pandacan oil depot dates back to December 1941 when the retreat of Filipino and American troops to Bataan led to whatever oil reserves were left being poured out of the Pandacan tanks into the Pasig River, where the gasoline ignited and lit the sky with a dull glow for days. There are still Filipinos who remember that nightmarish scene—and to think that the depot hadn't even been bombed, or its tanks filled to capacity.

It's a sad demonstration of the merry-go-round state of affairs in our country that a city council decision based on the lessons of Sept. 11 was watered down by a mayor faced with the combined opposition of the Department of Energy and the oil companies. Malacañang keeps reminding everyone that terrorism represents a clear and present danger, yet it was an executive department that tried to thwart the execution of a measure aimed at depriving terrorists of a juicy target.

It took the Supreme Court to decide that a security issue is, indeed, ample reason to rezone a district and that, furthermore, the rezoning should be implemented within a strict deadline.

So what will it be? More talk or finally action? To think that the Pandacan depot is only the most spectacularly obvious of the many terrorist targets the metropolis has. It has taken six years to resolve what to do with one—so how long will it take to eliminate the others?

We have yet to see a sober analysis made of the vulnerable infrastructure of Metro Manila, or the other metropolitan centers in our country. And an integrated, realistic plan of action to thwart potential threats and enhance public confidence and security.

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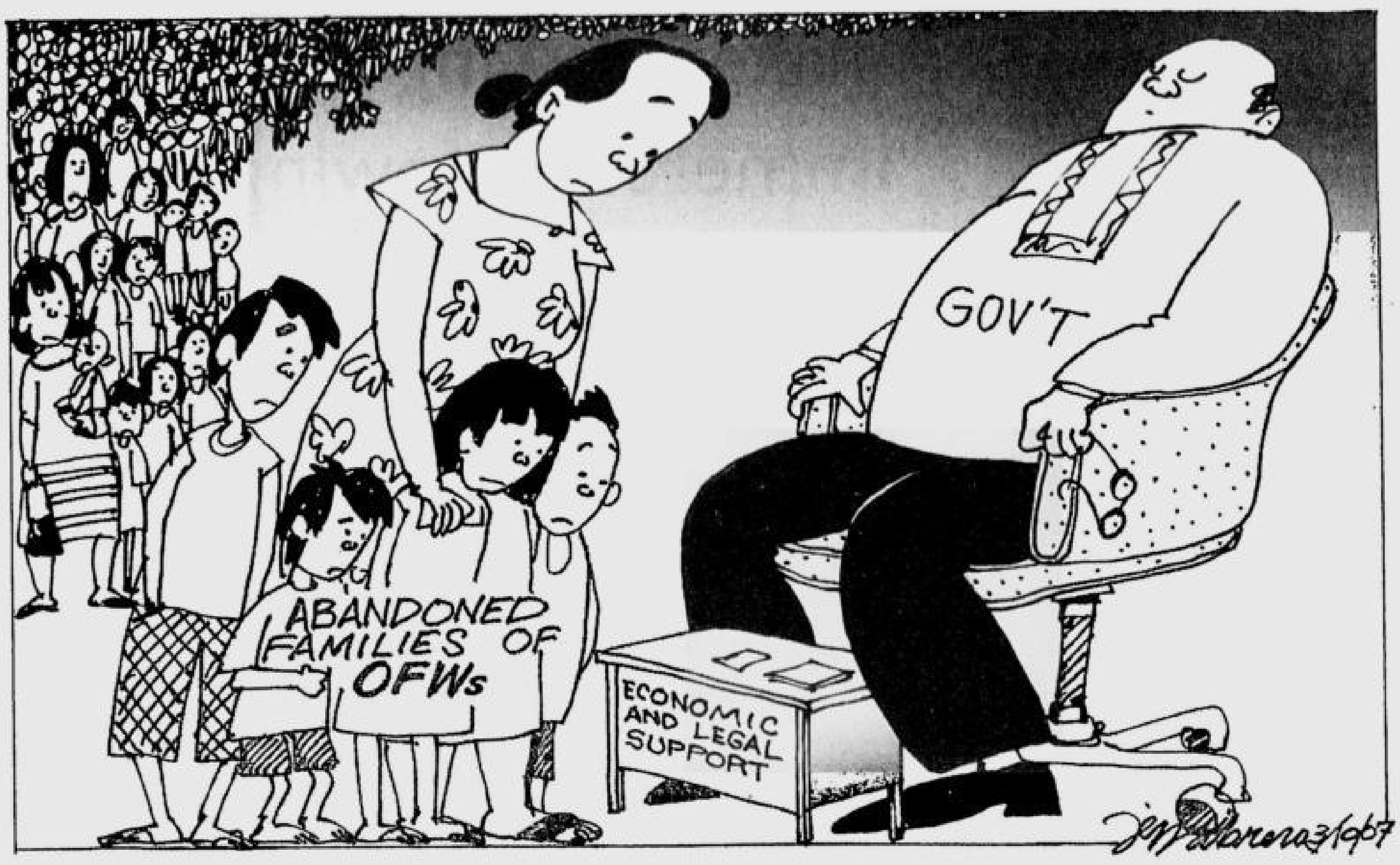

Auction of public offices

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

SHORTLY AFTER MY RETIREMENT FROM the Supreme Court in 1994, I received an invitation from Sen. Ernesto Maceda to breakfast at the Manila Hotel. I went, wondering what we were going to talk about. He cleared it up soon enough and said he wanted me to join the senatorial slate of the Nationalist People's Coalition, of which he was the president.

I was flabbergasted. I have never been directly involved in politics although my father was for 20 years a member of the Municipal Board of Manila (when it was still prestigious and respectable) and I worked for quite a while with Speaker J. B. Laurel Jr. and Speaker Daniel Romualdez in the House of Representatives. My initial reaction was to laugh at his offer but I checked the impulse because I knew that Ernie was not joking.

While giving me time to recover from my surprise, he gave me a review of my qualifications (of which I was painfully aware) and said I would get a lot of support from my thousands of former students and also from other voters because of my record in the Supreme Court. He further ornamented his undeserved encomium of me with the promise that the party would give me P5 million for my campaign expenses.

I had already made up my mind to decline his invitation but said, to be courteous, that I would think about it. To show that I was not completely disinterested, I asked him if the ticket would include entertainers and he dismissed the idea outright as arrant nonsense. I then thanked him for the breakfast and said I would send him my answer soon.

The following day, I wrote Senator Maceda that, while I was grateful for his invitation, I nevertheless was begging off. I said that the previous evening I had attended a free musical program and not a single person in the big audience recognized or talked to me. I said I would make a poor candidate and suggested that he choose some other person more popular with the voters. Ernie graciously replied that I was underrating myself, and that ended my direct but brief involvement in elective politics.

The senatorial slate Maceda finally organized did not include any entertainer as he had promised. But among the candidates was Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., who did not make it to the Senate. The elections of that year exacted, as usual, plenty of political propaganda, especially for the senatorial candidates who had to campaign nationwide and spend hundreds of millions of pesos to be elected. Worse—or probably, Good!—not all of the big spenders won

Looking back, I am amused by Ernie's offer to give me P5 million for my campaign kitty. The amount was ridiculously inadequate even then, but I suppose he meant it only as an addition to my own personal budget for my total expected expenses. I didn't have that kind of money, of course, nor did I think I could recover whatever I would have spent for my campaign once I was already in office. That nasty thought never entered my mind.

All these memories thank me that I was level-headed enough—and also not prosperous enough—to resist the temptation to enter politics and be elected to some important but not necessarily honest position. Thank God I was, unlike many unscrupulous candidates who felt they could recover all their campaign investments by availing themselves of the rich opportunities for graft in the office they would have profitably bought.

There was a report some days ago of three senators who have so far already spent millions of pesos on TV commercials alone. Consider that these are only initial outlays that will multiply with other electioneering expenses legal and illegal, like the Garci tapes. And note, too, that the campaign period has only just begun.

I do not say that all the candidates who spend hundreds of millions of pesos to get elected intend to recover their expenses once they are elected by hook or by crook, mostly by crook. There are surely some people who sincerely want to serve the public and are willing to spend their fortunes for this noble purpose. True, there may also be some candidates who, despite their paucity of financial resources, are nevertheless elected precisely because of their intelligence and integrity. But these exceptional statesmen are a niggardly small but admirable minority.

The demand for exorbitant expenses is especially insistent in the senatorial elections where the constituency to be courted is the whole nation. That is why I am for the return to the senatorial district under the Jones Law, where the winning candidate did not have to spend enormous fortunes to be the acknowledged political kingpin of just a limited area as his familiar bailiwick.

Under the present system, the senator who is elected at large, and at tremendous cost of time, effort and especially money, is expected to know the problems and conditions of all the more than 7,100 islands of the Philippine archipelago, where he is mostly unknown. The temporary tenant in Malacañang is also elected nation-wide, but after all he is the President of all the people. The senator is also elected by the entire electorate, but he is only one among 23 others like Senator Lapid.

A man of strong faith and morals

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

"ABOVE ALL, WE HAVE TO VINDICATE THE wisdom and validity of our Constitution. We are called upon not only to restore all the precious principles of checks and balances which this administration has jettisoned, again and again, but also to reestablish the orderly rule of law prescribed by the fundamental charter. We have to scrub away from the government structure the accumulated barnacles of compadres, relatives, political favorites, protégés and hangers-on that have fastened themselves to the edifice of Juan de la Cruz."

Does that sound like an excellent prescription for our present-day ills? Yes. Except that the above passage was written over 50 years ago. What this says about the Philippine polity is for the reader to ponder. Instead, this column will focus on the author of the above quotation, Jose P. Laurel, whose 116th birth anniversary was yesterday, March 9, and his legacy.

First and foremost, in his more than 50 years of public service (in all three branches of government), not a whisper, not a breath of graft and corruption was ever associated with his name. His lifestyle never changed. It was common knowledge that his house in Peñafrancia, Paco (where he lived for most of his public life) was bought with a large fee he had earned while he was in private practice. While he served in Malacañang, his wife and family stayed in their Peñafrancia home. The official meals served in the Palace while he was President were strictly limited to one course, by his order. By the way, I have never seen a picture of his wife in an official function.

Second, and equally important, Laurel was a man of strong faith and morals. Moreover, with him there was no such thing as a distinction between the morality he practiced as a public official and the morality he practiced as a private individual. They were one and the same. He didn't cheat the people, and he didn't cheat on his wife.

Third, while it may seem like an oxymoron, he was a gentleman politician. He immediately extended his congratulations to Claro Recto when the latter defeated him in 1931. He was also a statesman, unhesitating in the sacrifice of personal ambitions for the common good. When he was defeated in 1949 in his presidential bid, in what was considered to be the most fraudulent elections the Philippines ever had, he did not file an election protest, because he did not want to further destabilize the country. He refused to run again in 1953, and gave way to Ramon Magsaysay, because he felt that the country could not afford another fraudulent election, and the army would refuse to cheat against Magsaysay (who was defense secretary).

Finally, when it came to principles and defending the public good, Laurel was uncompromising and fearless: Barely one month in office as secretary of the interior under Governor General Leonard Wood, he resigned his position because he thought the latter had gone against both policy, practice and precedent. He refused to reconsider, telling Wood, "The honor of my country as well as my own do not permit me."

As a jurist, under Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon, he did not hesitate to bring the latter up short when he thought the fiery-tempered Quezon was becoming too dictatorial and encroaching on the independence of the judiciary or the legislature.

He defied Japanese Prime Minister Tojo who summoned him to Japan and ordered him to declare war on the United States and Great Britain. He faced down the dreaded Japanese Military Police (Kempetai) several times, one of which was when he refused to hand over Manuel A. Roxas (saying that it would be done only over his dead body) for execution. Even when the Kempetai held him in Fort Santiago, he would not be cowed.

He told the Americans that they did not defend the Philippines adequately during the Pacific War. He did not hesitate to point out the one-sidedness of US-Philippine treaties, which encroached on our sovereignty, even after independence (example: the Philippine government could not change its foreign exchange rate without the approval of the US president). When he was called anti-American, he scoffed. He was pro-Filipino, period.

The reader will agree that Jose P. Laurel cast a giant shadow. And yet this lion of a man did not think it was beneath his dignity to serve his mother hand and foot when she was ailing: he bathed her, combed her hair, fed her, cut her nails, pushed her wheelchair around. When she died, he wore a black necktie for the rest of his life as a sign of mourning, refusing to cast it off even when it did not comply with the dress requirements for an audience with the emperor of Japan.

This lion of a man did not think twice about serving his wife breakfast in bed, or about asking for her opinions and listening to them with respect (he told his sons that the one thing he would not brook was their giving her any cause for displeasure).

This lion of a man authored the first bill granting Filipino women the right to vote. It is a joy to read the way he cut the arguments of the bill's opponents to pieces (unfortunately, it took another decade before suffrage was granted). In other words, there was not an ounce of male chauvinism in his body.

Politicians, government officials and employees, as well as husbands and sons, would do well to emulate this man who knew his priorities: His country above all else. Principle before pragmatism. Love and devotion, faith and morals.

Lakas, Kampi battle at grass roots

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IF THE ADMINISTRATION AND OPPOSITION coalitions had a tough time putting together their respective senatorial lineups, it's even worse at the grass-roots level. This is because there are about 17,000 elective posts all over the country and for just about every post, there are two or three contenders. For the biggest party in the administration coalition, Lakas-CMD, this is a big headache since the party that could oppose many of its candidates at the grass roots belongs to the coalition. Kampi was founded by then Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in 1998 when she planned to run for president with Tito Sotto as her running mate. Ultimately she decided to run for vice president with Lakas presidential candidate Jose de Venecia.

* * *

The situation is ironic, for while GMA founded Kampi, she's national chair of Lakas while De Venecia is president. Yet candidates of both parties seem headed to clash in many places around the country. In Batangas, Lakas is likely to proclaim the popular Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos-Recto as its gubernatorial candidate against incumbent Gov. Armand Sanchez, who has jumped from the Liberal Party to Kampi. In Pampanga, it is most likely that Lilia Pineda will go against Gov. Mark Lapid. This situation could be repeated in various posts all over the country, if the coalition's arbitration committee, composed of heads of Lakas, Kampi, the LP Atienza Wing, the LDP and the NPC, fails to hammer out a compromise.

While it might seem convenient that Kampi is getting the Lakas defectors, some pundits are wondering how these self-inflicted blows could affect the administration coalition's performance. Both groups were recently summoned to the Palace to discuss some modus vivendi, but the conflicts continue. Kampi is widely believed to be under the protective wings of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

* * *

Speaker De Venecia admitted that political feuds at the grass roots are a big problem, but said Lakas is maintaining a "tight grip" on local politics. Half of country's 80 governors are with Lakas and the rest are divided among six allied parties. On the other hand, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, a Kampi stalwart, says that out of 1,560 town mayors, about 600 are with Kampi. Kampi is not out to contest Lakas now, he says, but it looks forward to 2010, by which time it should have built itself up as the dominant party. Already, pundits are speculating that Kampi might challenge De Venecia, who's running for a third term and possibly his fifth term as speaker. But Ilocos Sur Rep. Eric Singson of Lakas shoots that prospect down, saying JDV would have the vote of the 29 "Solid North" representatives, who'll be among over 140 House members supporting him in the 14th Congress, whose core consists of about 80 Lakas members.

* * *

But if Kampi, currently headed by Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, has been strengthening its ranks with Lakas' fallout, it has a lot of image-building to do. The recent SWS survey, which was commissioned by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, included a question about which political party "does many things that benefit the citizens." Lakas led with 23 percent, followed by LP and Bayan Ko while Kampi did not rate at all. Lakas stalwarts rejoice at that result, and point out that their party has produced two presidents (Fidel Ramos, Lakas chair emeritus, and GMA) and two vice presidents (GMA and Teofisto Guingona). Moreover, almost all the reform laws since the time of Ramos have been introduced by Lakas, including the fiscal reforms that shielded the economy from the 1987 Asian crisis and lately the aberrations in the Chinese and US stock markets. By contrast, say some Lakas leaders, Kampi is perceived as a party of shadowy politicians.

* * *

In the last two weeks of February, Cecile Alvarez and I had some reminiscences of Edsa I with a number of veterans of 1986 over dzRH. In the first Sunday of this month, we invited former UP and now Kalayaan College president Jose Abueva to take a hard look at what ought to be done to preserve its gains. He stressed that while Edsa brought back the old democracy of patronage and the presidential system, it failed to consolidate the gains, as evidenced by the continuing Filipino Diaspora. People power "was not a sudden and overnight happening," he noted, and our problem in the second phase is how to "institutionalize" it, how to enshrine institutions and strengthen them.

* * *

A lot of citizens have been sufficiently concerned about the downslide of the education sector and they're doing something about it. One of the most enlightened groups is the Foundation for Worldwide People Power Inc. (FWWPP), founded by INQUIRER founding chair Eugenia Apostol five years ago and other professionals. FWWPP's main program is the launch of the "Education Revolution" in 2002, as a "People Power-inspired long-term solution to alleviate poverty." This it seeks to do by helping to narrow the "achievement gap" between the 18 million public school students, many of whom do poorly in various qualifying tests, and the fortunate few who can afford high-quality private education.

FWWPP has two programs. One is the community action program, a takeoff from the Adopt-A-School Act of 1998, which seeks to organize leaders and residents of various communities to plan and carry out projects that will improve their public schools. Today local groups are undertaking projects in more than 600 public schools. Then there's the "Mentoring the Mentors Program," a series of activities aimed at improving the teachers' instructional leadership, value formation and professional skills. FWWPP has held sessions for six DepEd administrative regions, including the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, with over 1,000 participants composed of regional directors, superintendents and principals, and master teachers. To carry out its noble goals and programs, FWWPP is soliciting donations. It can be reached at 631-4970 or at its e-mail execdir@FWWPP.org.

There's still time for automated polls

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

"EVEN NOW, IF THEY REALLY WANT TO MOVE, they still have time to computerize the elections," says Sen. Dick Gordon.

"They" of course refers to the members of the Commission on Elections, especially Chairman Benjamin Abalos, who have repeatedly protested that "there is no more time" for the implementation of RA 9369, calling for a test-run of an Automated Elections System for this year's elections.

As sponsor in the Senate of this law, Gordon is understandably upset that the body charged with ensuring clean, orderly and honest elections has shown no inclination to speed up automation of the voting process, and the counting and canvassing of the election results. Automated elections were mandated by law in 1997—a full 10 years ago—and the new law merely amends the original legislation by removing the requirement for a specific type of technology. And yet, despite the long lead time and spending approximately P3 billion on flawed equipment and fraudulent deals, the Comelec is nowhere near the goal of automation.

RA 9369 provides for full automation in two provinces and two highly urbanized areas each in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, chosen by the Comelec with the consent of their respective councils. An appropriation of P2.6 billion has been provided for this year's test run, with a nationwide automated election system scheduled for 2010.

"I don't understand why they keep saying there is no more time," insists Gordon. "If they really wanted to try automation, they could simply lease voting machines from other countries. In Hawaii, for example, the machines I saw even asked questions in Ilocano!"

And if the Comelec insists it doesn't have the funds for computerization, Gordon has an even simpler solution: use computers already in place in public schools.

* * *

SOME parties have accused Gordon of favoring a supplier, Mega Data, a Filipino firm that created its own voting software dubbed "Botong Pinoy."

"But it doesn't even have to be Botong Pinoy," says Gordon. "The law is 'technology neutral,' it doesn't specify a type of machine and merely demands that the technology adopted must be of demonstrative capacity, economical and effective."

Gordon admits, though, to fancying Botong Pinoy "because we don't even need to buy new machines. The owners are willing to give the Comelec the software and train teachers and Comelec personnel on its use."

And while the Comelec says it has already spent P35 million on storing the computers that had been rendered inutile by virtue of a Supreme Court decision nullifying a computerization deal, Gordon says that with Botong Pinoy software, "there will be no need to pay for storage of the computers." He adds: "If they want to buy new computers, all they have to do is to turn these over after the elections to the schools, and we would have a national computerization program in place. After all, these machines would be needed only one day in a given year."

* * *

GORDON confesses to be puzzled by the way the Comelec commissioners have dragged their feet while pretending to be implementing the law.

"The commissioners went around the world to look at voting machines, and I myself went to observe the machines at work in India, San Francisco, even Hawaii."

Now Abalos excuses their inaction by saying they have run out of time for a public education drive on the use of such machines, saying this would need a minimum of six months.

But Gordon disproves this by recounting how, when he brought over some machines from Hawaii for a public demonstration in Barangay Holy Spirit in Quezon City and in Arellano High School, the people there, including the students, immediately showed familiarity with its workings after a few tries. After all, in an age when people routinely use ATM's, remit money via cell phones, and demonstrate familiarity with the Internet, voting by computer is no longer a technological challenge.

Gordon is gung-ho about computerization of the polls for one reason only: "We can put to rest electoral protests that prevent this country from ever being truly united." As the saying goes, in the Philippines, nobody ever loses an election, they are just cheated.

As required by the law, the automated elections system must provide a "voter-verified paper audit trail" so that voters can see that their votes as cast are recorded accurately. The system must also be secured against unauthorized access, and assure accuracy in recording or reading the votes, tabulating, consolidating/canvassing, and electronically transmitting and storing the results. It must also be accessible to illiterate and disabled voters.

* * *

AUTOMATION, says Gordon, will eliminate ghost voters, through the use of biometrics that will provide election officers with an individual voter's face and fingerprint. And with the "human factor" removed from the registration, counting and canvassing of votes, this will spell the end of "*cadena*" and "*dagdag-bawas*."

"Under the Constitution, the Comelec has to implement all laws on elections," states Gordon, but with the AES law, the Comelec "didn't even imagine to try to use the bill."

And while President Macapagal-Arroyo certified the AES law as an "urgent" bill, she has said very little and done even less in the face of the Comelec's "deadma" of the law's provision for a pilot test of automation this May.

We can surmise no end on why there seems to be a conspiracy of ignorance regarding automated polls. Is it because candidates are beholden to operatives skilled in manipulating election results? Or because even now they have plans to cheat or are counting on operatives to cheat their way to their posts? Says Gordon of GMA: "Her silence is deafening."

Europe's fight against terrorism

WORLD VIEW

Gijs de Vries

THREE YEARS AGO THIS MONTH, INTERNATIONAL terrorism struck Europe. In simultaneous bomb attacks on trains in Madrid, Islamist terrorists killed 191 people and wounded over 2,000. Last month, the suspects went on trial in a Spanish court.

Violent extremists claiming to act in the name of Islam have hit many countries around the world, before and after the attacks on America of Sept. 11, 2001. But the attacks in Madrid and in London in July 2005 showed that Europe is one of their prime targets, prompting European governments to respond by bolstering their defenses, including at the level of the European Union.

In the past three years, security standards at European ports and airports have been strengthened, biometric passports have been introduced and terrorist financing targeted. More than 2,000 terrorism suspects and those suspected of other major forms of crime have been arrested and extradited on the basis of a European Arrest Warrant.

Similarly, European security and intelligence services have pooled resources in a common center for threat analysis in Brussels. Through Europol and Eurojust, European police forces and judicial authorities have intensified cooperation, and ministers are preparing to grant law-enforcement agencies of other EU countries access to national databases of DNA and fingerprints. For the first time, security-related research figures prominently in the EU budget, with 1.4 billion euros earmarked for this purpose. European police and security agencies have prevented many terrorist attacks.

But, while Europe's defenses have been considerably strengthened, the threat of terrorism has not diminished. The risk of new attacks in Europe and worldwide is serious and will remain so for the foreseeable future. To face this global threat, international cooperation must be improved. In particular, Muslims and non-Muslims need to combine their efforts to defend the sanctity of human life.

> Detention without trial is counterproductive in the fight against terrorism. So is torture. To defeat the terrorists we must offer a vision of a more just and equitable world

First, the world must work from common standards. Many countries still need to improve their defenses and implement the 16 counter-terrorism instruments established by the United Nations, including the convention against terrorist financing. Reducing the risk of terrorists obtaining weapons of mass destruction equally requires stronger international cooperation.

To this end, the EU is working closely with its partners, from Morocco and Indonesia to Saudi-Arabia and other Gulf states. The EU will extend support to the African Union's Center for Counter-Terrorism in Algiers. Cooperation with India, Pakistan and Russia has also been strengthened, and the Union will continue to work closely with the US, Japan and Australia.

Second, more must be done to address the international conflicts that terrorists seek to exploit. Afghanistan remains a critical front-line state in the fight against terrorism. The Taliban must not be allowed to bomb Afghanistan back in time. The EU will increase its aid, notably in support of the Afghan police.

Likewise, efforts to bring peace to the Middle East remain essential. While progress on the road to peace between Israel and the Palestinians would not by itself stop terrorism, it would deal a powerful blow to terrorist incitement and propaganda. Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, will continue to press for results.

Third, we must counter the ideology of the terrorists. Very few Muslims want to live under a seventh century-style caliphate. They prefer to live in freedom and in parliamentary democracies.

What unites Muslims and non-Muslims is a commitment to basic human rights. To respect and promote human rights is critical to winning the battle for hearts and minds, including in Europe. This means that governments need to practice what they preach. Detention without trial is counterproductive in the fight against terrorism. So is torture. To defeat the terrorists we must offer a vision of a more just and equitable world and act accordingly, at home and abroad. Ultimately, the values of liberty and justice are our best defense. ***Project Syndicate***

Gijs de Vries is the EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator.

Truth hurts

YOUNG BLOOD

Frances Paola G. Doplon

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I ADMIRE THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO AUDITIONED for "American Idol 6" and got rejected for their courage, confidence and commitment to their dream. But I also wonder how some people ever got there in the first place.

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against them. It just strikes me as strange how people who obviously lack the talent for singing acquire their overblown self-esteem. It's not that they're not talented or that they're losers, but it's clear singing is not just for them. How could have they been so deaf to their lack of singing talent?

A common scenario: Rejected applicant walks out of the audition room in disbelief. He curses the judges and complains that they have been unfair. He condemns Simon Cowell for dismissing the "true" American Idol.

Of course, there's a whole entourage of family and friends standing outside, waiting to greet him. And it annoys me when everyone rushes to console the terrible singer and says things like, "It's their loss!" or "Those judges have bad taste," or "No way! You're the best singer in the world!"

No wonder those contestants are blind to their limitations. Their supporters have kept them in the dark all these years!

Take Minneapolis contestant 33052. After the judges gave her their thumbs down, she kept demanding to know why. The judges cited the poor quality of her singing.

"But why?" she protested. "I've been taking voice lessons for 10 years. How come no one has ever told me that before?"

"That's because I wasn't your teacher," Cowell told her.

"But why? I have a degree in Vocal Performance..."

The judges, including the guest judge Jewel, sniggered.

"Is there anything else that I can do?" she finally asked.

"Leave," said Simon.

Apparently, it was the first time contestant No. 33052 heard that her singing was not good. And that revelation had to happen on international television!

There's nothing wrong with prodding and encouraging people, but something's definitely wrong when the encouragement is an outright lie.

We all have our own talents, but we can't have them all. We can't even choose our inclinations or areas of specialization. These are gifts. Those talents we don't have, we can develop. But let's capitalize on what is given to us.

Contestant No. 33052 is the master of her fate, the captain of her soul. She's responsible for humiliating herself. But what about her supporters, friends and family, didn't they tell her that singing was just not her forte? What about her voice coach and vocal performance teachers? I'm not putting the blame entirely on them, but they are partly responsible. Just think about the lies they have been telling her all these years.

To people like these, having real and meaningful relationships means accepting the other person totally, including his capabilities, abilities and limitations. Pointing out a friend's defect or shortcoming is not part of it. If you really accept him, you just live with it. So if a friend has a food particle stuck between his teeth, you just let him walk around the room and continuously talk and smile at everyone. And when he comes back and asks why the girls were giggling, you shrug your shoulders and pretend that you see nothing wrong. Or you say, "Maybe they think you're cute."

What a friend! You let an opportunity to end his foolishness pass. Who will tell him the truth, that he has been making a fool of himself, but the people who truly care?

Usually it's not easy to point out someone's mistakes or shortcomings. Instead of viewing constructive criticism as a helpful thing, some people take it as a betrayal. But that saves them from further and deeper hurts. They may not even believe you, but at least you tried and at least they know.

"May I tell you something?" someone once asked me and proceeded to tell me something I should improve upon. Although I was initially hurt, I appreciated it when she explained that she mentioned it not because she saw me as "defective," but because she knew I could become better. I like people who tell me such things to my face instead of gossiping behind my back.

Of course, it can be risky. When I finally decided (after so much reflection and hesitation) to tell a friend about a certain area she ought to improve on, I was worried that I was putting years of friendship on the line. However, I thought that her personal growth was more important than our friendship. Our conversation was a dramatic one and we ended up crying. We did not talk to each other for a week! But eventually we got over it and our relationship became stronger because we were honest to each other.

Now we can say anything to each other and laugh about anything. When she tells me that I'm like this or like that, I trust her because I know she is doing it out of authentic concern, and I know she still loves me for what I am and who I can be.

Telling someone he stinks does sound harsh. Sorry, but as much as we want to tell people in the most pleasant way, sometimes we can't do it too well. But hey, if author Bo Sanchez didn't tell his pal about his body odor, the man wouldn't have discovered the deodorant and heard the girl, who had been avoiding him, say yes.

A clear danger here is having people think that they are measured by their qualities, abilities or possessions. I wanted to tell one guy who also got rejected in the "American Idol" audition and felt that he had been stripped of his self-esteem, "Dude, your singing does not define who you are! Your singing may suck, but you don't."

Believing in someone doesn't mean that you should tell him that he's a great dancer when he's got two left feet. By all means, be supportive. Just be careful with your words because no one wants and deserves to be lied to. We have eyes that see and hearts that care. We have the power to bring people out from the shadows and into the light. And we have an invaluable weapon, which is truth. Truth hurts, but it sets us free.

Frances Paola G. Doplon, 25, is taking up graduate studies in English Language and Literature at the Ateneo de Manila University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

‘To fight for fish and rice’

WHEN WE WERE IN GRADE school, every time we sang "Philippines, My Philippines," we used to confuse "peace" with "fish," and "right" with "rice" (the best argument against imposing a foreign language on the young). Hence, when we reached the line "to fight for peace and right," we raised our voices with all our might and sang "to fight for fish and rice!" We thought that since our fathers worked to provide us food, we should also help to fight for it.

Today, it seems that as a people we are more confused than we were about the meaning of peace and freedom. Using force to quell public dissent is now said to promote peace and order, and moving the economy forward has become the raison d'être for the ideological cleansing of the countryside. Another Edsa will mean that we Filipinos are so stupid as to "shoot ourselves in the foot," said President Macapagal-Arroyo in her speech at this year's Edsa I anniversary.

The obvious logic here is to make the Filipino people believe that bread and freedom cannot go together and they have to choose between the two. If we want freedom, we should be prepared to go hungry and, thus, lose the tons of rice and noodles donated by the kind-hearted to the burgeoning poor.

What is happening today, however, is we are on the verge of losing both. Peace continues to evade us and we have to beg for foreign assistance to resolve simple banditry, let alone hold dialogue with local insurgents. Blood has to be squeezed from every citizen by means of VAT to service the nation's debts so the cycle of borrowing can continue. The overseas workers' program has to be "super-improved" for world-class status so we get to be No. 1 in the new international slave market.

Happily, all is not lost. I beg to disagree with those who plan to fence-sit in the coming elections and skip a possible chance to stop the relentless assaults on our civil liberties, the colossal raids on our national coffers and the barefaced rape of the rule of law to suit the wishes of the mighty and the powerful.

Let the true meaning of peace and right prevail in this country for the next generation of Filipinos.

—EVA MAGGAY INCIONG,
Rm. 301 Union Square,
145 15th Ave., Cubao, QC

Inquirer should hear other side

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS stories headlined "Closing firm's execs got P66M in pay, perks" (INQUIRER, 2/22/07) and "Philcomsat inquiry bares agency's guts" (INQUIRER, 2/23/07) about the PCGG-sequestered Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) and Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC).

Sadly, the reports were manifestly biased and prejudiced, based only on the unsubstantiated statements of Erlinda I. Bildner, whose authority as president and director of Philcomsat remains disputed to this day. Nobody from the corporations was asked about her malicious statements in a "slow" breaking news event.

She and her confederates are now being prosecuted for criminally breaking into and ransacking the corporate offices in September 2006. It seems the interview of Bildner, which was so self-serving, was part of the ploy to further damage these sequestered corporations (and the PCGG), most unfairly.

Given Bildner's misleading statements, please allow the proper representatives of these corporations to air their side of the story in the same prominent space of the front page where the subject articles were printed. This, so that the public and government may not be misled by the malicious accusations intended primarily to cover up the blunders and crimes of Bildner and company.

The representatives are ready any time to explain, for instance, the item "cash for Sandiganbayan TRO (temporary restraining order) POTC-Philcomsat case—P2 million." The sum was charged by a law firm for handling the case, but it was made to appear as a bribe for the tribunal, so unfair to the court, the firm and those I have been assisting since August last year. Yes, we expect the INQUIRER to hear our side of the story, as it were.

As surely as it seeks balance, the INQUIRER should read the book "On the Edge of Heaven," by Bildner's mother, Erlinda K. Ilusorio, on what the latter said about her very own daughter. The INQUIRER should also take note of the decision of the Court of Appeals dated Feb. 12, 2007 which directed the prosecutor of Mandaluyong "to reinstate the information filed with the Metropolitan Trial Court against respondents Aurora I. Montemayor, Sylvia Ilusorio-Yap and Erlinda Ilusorio-Bildner for two (2) counts of falsification of public document."

As to the Senate hearings, not all evidence is in. The statement of a senator does not commit or bind the body. Only a committee report reported out, debated on and adopted by the entire Senate matters. The premature, tendentious and unkind observations of any member of the body must be seen in that light. A lawmaking body hears views not to promote any member's personal agenda. Supposedly. That is precisely why we have filed a petition to recuse or inhibit another senator whose family stands to benefit directly from maligning those I represent, in whose behalf I write this plea for balance and fairness.

—RAV SAGUISAG

The point of the series is that the PCGG nominees are supposed to protect the alleged plundered assets. Documentary evidence submitted to the Senate committee inquiry last year suggests otherwise. Saguisag should check with his clients whose comments the INQUIRER reporters sought. The reporters were ignored.—Ed.

Voters' bigger responsibility during elections

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO PRAYERFULLY greet and salute Conrado de Quiros. To him I say: "Keep up your courage; you have affirmed the truth" (Acts 23:11, New English Bible) about the three senatorial candidates of the Kapatiran Party: Martin Bautista, Adrian Sison and Zosimo Paredes—they deserve to win.

I fully agree with him that candidates for an elective public office have the obligation to be heard and to advertise themselves; they should not just sit back and trust in the intelligence of the Filipino voters. But the bigger burden of responsibility to make deserving candidates win lies with us, the public. ("Courage," INQUIRER, 2/21/07)

May I suggest that we Filipinos actively campaign for the election of Kapatiran's candidates and vote only for them.

May I also suggest that De Quiros invite the Filipino people to be vigilant in guarding the votes of the Kapatiran senatorial candidates. Let us hope and pray that many Filipinos will positively respond to his invitation and come up with ways to ensure that the votes for these three Kapatiran candidates will be properly counted.

Let us start a bandwagon—let's start a vote-only-for Bautista, Sison and Paredes campaign. God bless our nation.

—ISIDORO A. PANLASIGUI JR.,
6 Big Horseshoe Drive,
1112 Quezon City

HEAVILY ARMED soldiers on patrol in cities: sowing peace or fear?

INQUIRER PHOTO

Militarization not answer to cry for food and justice

THIS IS IN CONNECTION WITH the news story "Soldiers prowling slums." (INQUIRER, 3/3/07) It seems we are now back to the days leading to martial law. Military forces are now operating in the National Capital Region, their presence felt in several Metro Manila barangays and justified under the pretext of maintaining peace and order. Isn't the military usurping police function? Instead of creating an atmosphere of security, the soldiers are sowing fear and anxiety.

Notably, the soldiers are "deployed" in sites of development projects that are facing strong opposition from residents. To meet project deadlines, the government is rushing the forced eviction of the residents from these project sites.

We are also alarmed at reports that these soldiers are going around the communities looking for the leaders of people's organizations. This brings to mind the many urban poor leaders in Bulacan who were first subjected to military interrogation and harassment before they went missing or were killed.

The military itself has admitted that the deployment of soldiers in Metro Manila is part the "holistic approach to the insurgency problem." Moreover, in the context of the 2007 elections, we see urban militarization as part of another systematic conspiracy to manipulate the vote count. How many voters will again be disenfranchised or forced to vote for candidates not to their liking because of military threats and harassment?

Exercising our prophetic role, we denounce this political repression and assert that militarization is not the solution to the growing cry of the hungry, the homeless and the oppressed for food and justice. We remain vigilant against fraud and violence, especially in guarding the people's votes for the party-list groups that truly fight for the rights and interests of the urban and rural poor.

In the face of the chronic and worsening economic and political crises, we steadfastly journey with the poor in their struggle, and we embrace their cry and call for a life of dignity, just wages, shelter and basic social services. "Listen! The valiant cry in the streets; the envoys for peace weep bitterly." (Isaiah 33: 7 NRSV)

Salvation history reminds the Arroyo administration that by employing repression, it further engenders resistance. "The more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that Egyptians came to dread the Israelites." (Exodus 1:112) We add our voices in condemning the militarization of the NCR. We demand the immediate pullout of the military from urban areas. We further demand appropriate action against those responsible for this military deployment in urban areas.

—BRO. GILBERT
BILLENA, O.CARM,
on behalf of the Inter-Faith
Justice and Peace and Integrity
of Creation Network,
313 B San Miguel Compound
Tandang Sora,
Interior Pasong Tamo, QC

Soldiers urged: Help restore AFP's lost glory

I AM WRITING TO EXPRESS MY sadness over the Philippine military's lost glory. With the defunct Philippine Constabulary, it used to be a respected and admired institution.

Any student of Philippine history knows how valiantly, albeit under-equipped, the Filipino forces fought side by side with American soldiers in World War II. The Philippine military carried on with its glorious tradition through the Korean War and the Vietnam War. No other Philippine institution has sacrificed so much. It is disheartening to note that the way the Melo and Alston reports sounded about the extrajudicial killings of journalists, activists and students, more particularly government critics, the military have failed to live up to its glorious tradition.

More saddening—even fearsome—is the emergence of "serial killers" within its organization, whose operations apparently have the blessings of the high command. What will happen once these people are no longer in their uniform and return to civilian life? I shudder to think of them beefing up the ranks of roguish former cops and soldiers.

The decent among our soldiers (there are lots of them), active and retired, should do something to restore the lost glory of the once highly respected institution. The military exists to safeguard the people and not one individual.

—CECIL PERALTA,
ceperal@hotmail.com

Crowns more edifying if won by local talents

THE SPORTS SECTION OF THE FEB. 25 ISSUE of the INQUIRER featured the faces of the 12 professional basketball players who will compose the Philippine team that would be fielded in the Philippine quest for a berth in the Beijing Olympics next year. Some basketball pundits expect a lot from this all-pro national team.

Six or seven members of the 12-man squad are foreign-born and -bred imports who, after acquiring Filipino citizenship, have qualified to play in the Philippine Basketball Association and represent the Philippines in regional and international basketball competitions. This situation is not unique to the Philippines. Ever since the lifting of the ban on professional athletes in the Olympic Games and major sport events, many countries have been granting citizenship to foreign-born athletes for a shot at sporting glory.

For me, I find comfort in recalling that the Philippine basketball team to the world championship in Brazil in 1954 was composed entirely of amateur, home-bred players. Our team's third-place finish in that tournament was accentuated by the selection of Carlos Loyzaga as a member of the mythical first five. I was only a third year high school student in my hometown at that time, but the honors won by our country in 1954 left an indelible imprint in my memory and created a big impact on the national psyche.

I personally saw the Fiba (International Basketball Federation) world basketball championship game between Spain and Greece in Saitama, Japan last September. Spain won its first ever Fiba title by a big margin and its center Pau Gasol, a player of the Memphis Grizzlies in the National Basketball Association, was named the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the tournament. I was enthralled by the exceeding joy and national pride displayed by the Spanish players, all of them homegrown. Their feat was warmly acknowledged by the predominantly Japanese crowd of 20,000.

The 1954 Brazil tournament and the 2006 Japan edition are 52 years apart. Nonetheless, we of the grey generation can appreciate, as well as associate ourselves with, the genuine national pride felt by the Philippines in 1954 and by Spain in 2006. National honor is truly heartfelt, edifying and uplifting if achieved through indigenous talents.

—JENNIFER JARASA,
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Colon: Cebu's link to Chinese past

By Gavin Sanson Bagares
Cebu City

COLON STREET EVOKES A storied past. And promotion has something to do with it. A check on any tourist brochure or history book portrays it as "the oldest street in the Philippines."

In the 12th Association of Southeast Asian (Asean) Summit held in Cebu in January, the street even enjoyed media play as the organizers connected it to long Chinese presence in Cebu: A tour for the spouses of the Heads of Government touched on a portion of the street that intersects Osmeña Boulevard, decorated for the occasion as a "Chinatown."

But when did Colon really begin? And how did it become Cebu's Main Street and cultural locus associated with China?

Colon started out as a short road some 500 meters long and bounded at both ends by present-day Mabini and D. Jakosalem Streets. Today, it traverses hundreds of meters more to Tres de Abril Street in the San Nicolas district.

The etymology of the name is lost in time but may actually refer to the explorer Columbus (or "Colon" in Spanish)—the Genovese who served Spain's Catholic Kings in the 15th Century and claimed America for the Crown. However, the late folklorist, Jovito Abellana, claims in his unpublished manuscript, Bisaya Patronymesis Sri Visjaya, that Colon is an abbreviated form of Calle Colonia de los Españoles. Abellana also mentions that the land the street sits on belonged to Sri Bantug whose chiefly lineage goes back to Borneo.

The land of this apocryphal Sri Bantug entered recorded history as the Parian; and Colon may have been called originally as "Calle del Parian." The name "Parian" befuddles scholars to this day. The most widely accepted, however, is the meaning advanced by the book, Los Chinos en Filipinas (La Oceania Española, 1886), that "Parian" comes from a Mexican word for "marketplace;" plausible in the sense that the Philippine Parians were, indeed, traditionally, marketplaces. The Manila Parian, for one, was also known as "Alcaiceria," a marketplace for silks.

All the Parians in the Philippines began as Chinese ghettoes, the historical connection between silk and the Chinese not at all lost. The Cebu Parian's foundation goes back to 1590 or thereabouts when the Chinese started flocking to Philippine shores due to the increased trade opportunities offered primarily by the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade. Cebu's involvement in this cross-pacific commercial enterprise commenced in 1594 and ended in 1604. In and around those dates, the Chinese came and stayed, despite the lackluster performance of the Cebu end of the Galleon Trade.

In 1595, the Jesuit friar, Pedro Chirino, noted in his Relacion de las Islas Filipinas (ca. 1600) that Cebu City's Parian had 200 Chinese traders and artisans. The feast of Pentecost the following year saw "the solemn baptism" to the Catholic faith "of two Chinese of rank and a great number of others. The picture painted by Chirino is polyglot as these Chinese, he wrote, had settled with their retinue of Chinese, Japanese, Moluccan, and Bisayan wives and servants. (Chinese women were later prohibited from traveling to the Islands).

Thus began Cebu's long and fruitful association with the Chinese.

The backwater years

After the fiasco of the Galleon Trade in Cebu, the nascent Spanish community had no choice but to leave the island for the new colonial capital of Manila where commerce was robust. Cebu fast became a backwater. However, not everything was as grim as it appeared. The Chinese and their half-castes (or mestizos) that stayed behind eked out a modest living working with the alcalde mayor, or provincial governor, in an unholy alliance to monopolize local trade.

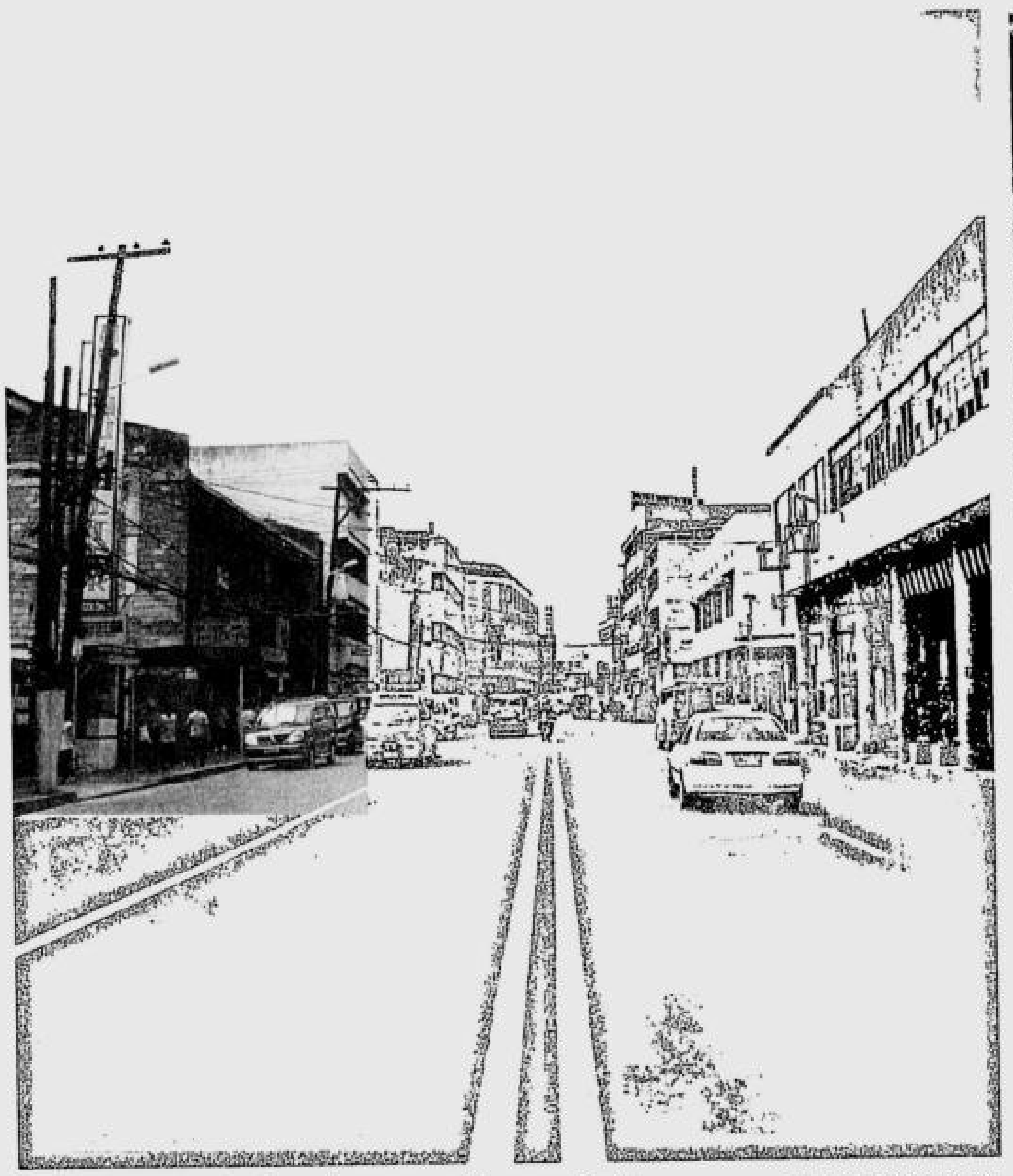
One can imagine from this scenario that Chinese and mestizo fortunes grew steadily over several generations. The ascendance of the mestizo over their Chinese brethren only came in the mid-eighteenth century when Spanish antipathy toward the Chinese resulted in the damaging expulsion orders of 1755 and 1756.

The Chinese Mestizos, legally definite from the Chinese, escaped the orders and continued their father's mercantile activities. In those years, the Chinese-ness of the Parian began to be eroded by Hispanization, even as mestizo fortunes grew with the relaxing economic atmosphere in the Philippines.

As a symbol of mestizo flowering, massive houses of stone-and-tile began to sprout in the Parian. Here they enjoyed near autonomy in their own town hall and parish church.

The Iglesia de San Juan Bautista itself became the most beautiful in the province, eclipsing the nearby cathedral and the Augustinian complex, which houses the famous icon of the Holy Child Jesus.

And while the houses immediately surrounding the church were considered the most prominent, the houses along Colon Street appeared more anciently. These residences, cheek-and-jowl by each other, were characterized by a tile-roofed overhang called tiamtam that effectuated a media agua or tapanko, and sheltered a store by day or an occasional vagrant by night.



COLON Street, today, from the vantage of Barangay Parian.

BOBOI COSTAS/CONTRIBUTOR

The huddled nature of these houses made them appear one of a piece. Privacy, however, was provided by private backyard orchards and gardens. In the distant past, when the Parian estuary was free flowing and navigable, many of these backyards probably had moorings for boats bearing goods.

Boomtown

The 19th Century bode well for Parian. The loss of the Spanish colonies in South America contributed to Spain's friendlier overtures toward China thereafter. Decrees from 1832 to 1843, for example, relieved Chinese junks from paying higher taxes than other foreign vessels making port of call.

More significantly, a general law was passed in 1863 that allowed all foreigners, including the Chinese, to practice whatever vocations they wished to pursue, own lands, and enjoy inheritance rights. Finally, by 1868, with the creation of the Guardia Civil, assurance that these rights would be enforced was in place.

All these meant that the Parian mestizos were increasingly faced by competition from the new Chinese migrants who took over their old roles as middlemen. The mestizos, on the other hand, already primed by the opening of Manila to international trade in 1834 and by Cebu's own opening to the world market in 1860, began speculating on land and ended up owning both urban and rural estates not only in Cebu but also in nearby provinces.

This reality for the mestizos of Parian enabled them to profit prodigiously from the bullish cash crop economy of the late 19th century. But by this time Cebu had become a bigger place and Parian was no longer a marketplace in the real sense of the word. Calle Infanta, or Magallanes, had become, in a sense, the central business district and it would remain so until the 1960s. Parian and her main street Colon ebbed to become the quiet residential district and office headquarters of Cebu's movers-and-shakers.

It was in the extension of Colon that things were happening. Theaters began to sprout where marshy land once had been. And with the cinemas Oriente, Empire, and Royo extant by 1914, Colon also began to be known as "Calle del Teatro." Simultaneously, Parian itself was referred to as "Press Row" and Colon as the Cebu Fleet Street judging from the many newspapers published there.

But the residential nature of Colon remained strong. Prominent families, native or not to the Parian, maintained houses there. The Old Guard Velosos, Valles, Gantuangcos, Garceses mingled with post-1860 magnates as the Ralloses and Vaños, who in turn called on the same address as the American-era plutocrats like the Cuencos and the Escaños.

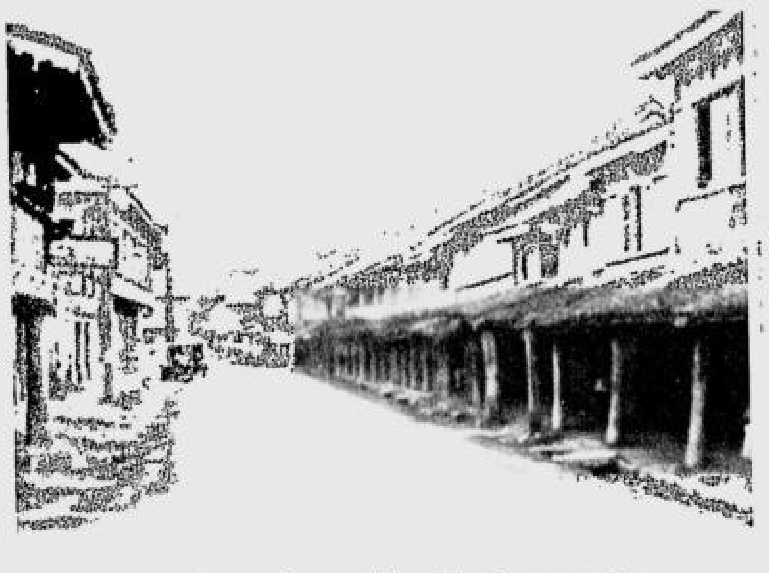
It would not be until the wane of Magallanes in the early 1970s that Colon would reassert its preeminence as Cebu's commercial hub. The old houses either gave way to arcaded establishments or their ample front yards did, hiding behind them the old homes—the last of which may be the 1940s abode of Don Victorino Reynes near corner Pelaez.

The commercial supremacy was not long-lived. When the 1990s hit its stride, malls began to sprout at the peripheries of the old city. Ayala Center Cebu bloomed on the grounds of the old Club Filipino Inc., a golfing enclave. And SM City Cebu rose from reclaimed land not too far away. With these big malls in place, Colon ebbed into second-class status, a blighted emporium for bargain hunters.

But Colon's strong suit remains its historicity. Cultural volunteers, heritage workers, historians, and tourist officers would like to connect Colon to the Cebu of yore when living was perceived to be rich and easy. But the fact is, Colon was once pioneer-frontier where foreigners, mainly Chinese, made a new start by battling many odds, including prejudice.

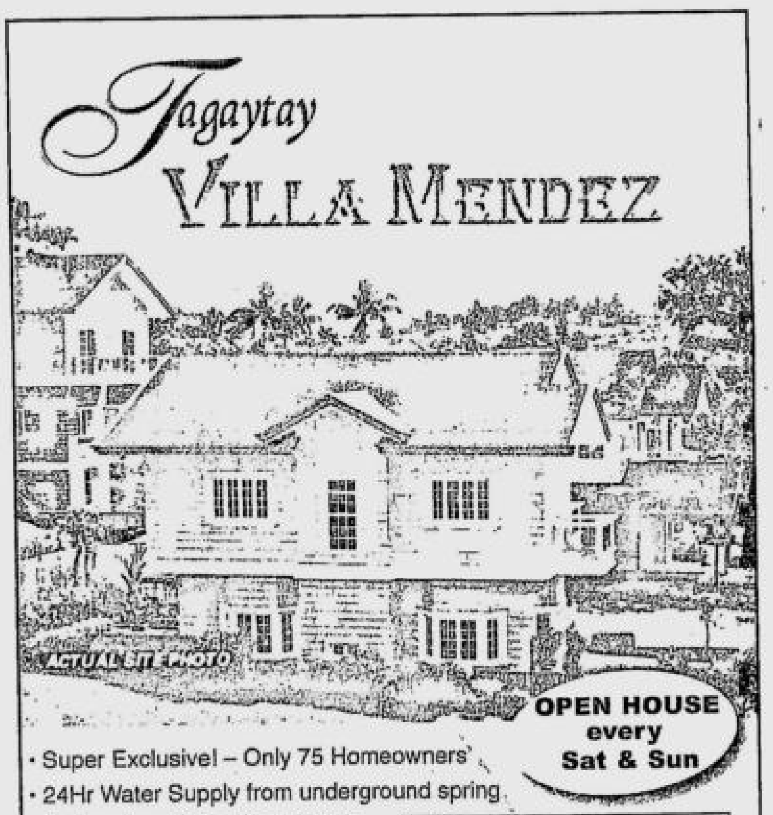
Colon and her alter ego Parian are Cebu's oldest historical link to the world's largest economy today, China. And it is good to remember that the seeds of globalization may have been planted there.

(Note from the author: Special thanks to the Cebuano Studies Center for use of its research facilities.)



COLON Street before electrification in 1905.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MEDALLE COLLECTION AT THE CEBUANO STUDIES CENTER



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PHILIPPINE MADE, Replika of ISRAEL'S ARK OF THE COVENANT. **Dr. Myles Munroe**, world renowned motivational speaker, author of best selling books, Pastor, Ambassador of the Bahamas, a mighty man of God **received with great joy the Replika of the Ark of the Covenant proudly Philippine made given by Mr. Paul and Grace Gupana. Dr. Munroe expressed his gratefulness and said, "Thank you so much! This is what I needed. I am going to put it in my sanctuary and it will be seen all over the world during my T.V. Program". He added, "Thank you for reminding us of what is most important on earth, that is the presence of God"** and he prayed for Paul and Grace saying, "I bless your family and everything you put your hands to do and let this day be the end of frustration in your life and the beginning of Kingdom Peace like never before, I release anointing with the power of God may this family be unified in Your presence and be in good health. Amen. **Sps. Paul and Grace Gupana are the owners of ABS Gen Herbs Int'l., Makers of ABS 7 Bitter Herbs, Charagen Ampalaya Forte 100% leaves extract.** (Department of Health recently vindicated Ampalaya based products as Herbal Medicine to fight diatetes 2.) **ABS Herbs company's outreach ministry is the HalleluYAH PG Ministries Int'l., who made and successfully unfurled the (2) two largest flags in the world, December 2006.** The Philippine and Israel flags both 200 meters by 100 meters or 2 hectares in size. Dr. Munroe conducted leadership training seminar at the PICC, Manila Hotel and Cebu last March 1-3, 2007. In photo is his lovely wife Ruth, Former Congressman Joe Ramirez, Executive Director of the Philippine National Breakfast Fellowship, Mr. Rene and Cathy Amaca of HalleluYAH PG Ministries Int'l., The Prime Mover of the **HalleluYAH 777 Celebration worldwide.**
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LGUs get ₱15B as GMA pushes Senate bets

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO on Thursday announced the increase of the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) share of all local government units in the country.

The announcement, loudly applauded by councilors attending their national conference here, took on a political color, however, when the President told the members of the Philippine Councilors' League at the latter part of her speech to support the senatorial ticket Team Unity of the administration coalition.

She said while she was aware that many of the councilors would themselves be busy campaigning for their own electoral bids in May, she had hoped that they would still continue to support the Team Unity senatorial slate.

The speech, made during the opening ceremonies of the PCL 2007 end-term national assembly at the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC), was the President's first official statement while in Cebu for two days for various events.

PCL National President Carlo Pontico Fortuna in an interview said they were expecting the President to ask their support for the victory of all the Team Unity candidates.

"I am allied with the administration, so for me, I would be very happy to assure the President of my support", Fortuna said.

Ms Arroyo's speech, however, focused on the economic progress the country has made, which, she said, became possible because of the support of local government officials.

She said it was the first time in the country's economic history that it had 24 quarters of uninterrupted growth.

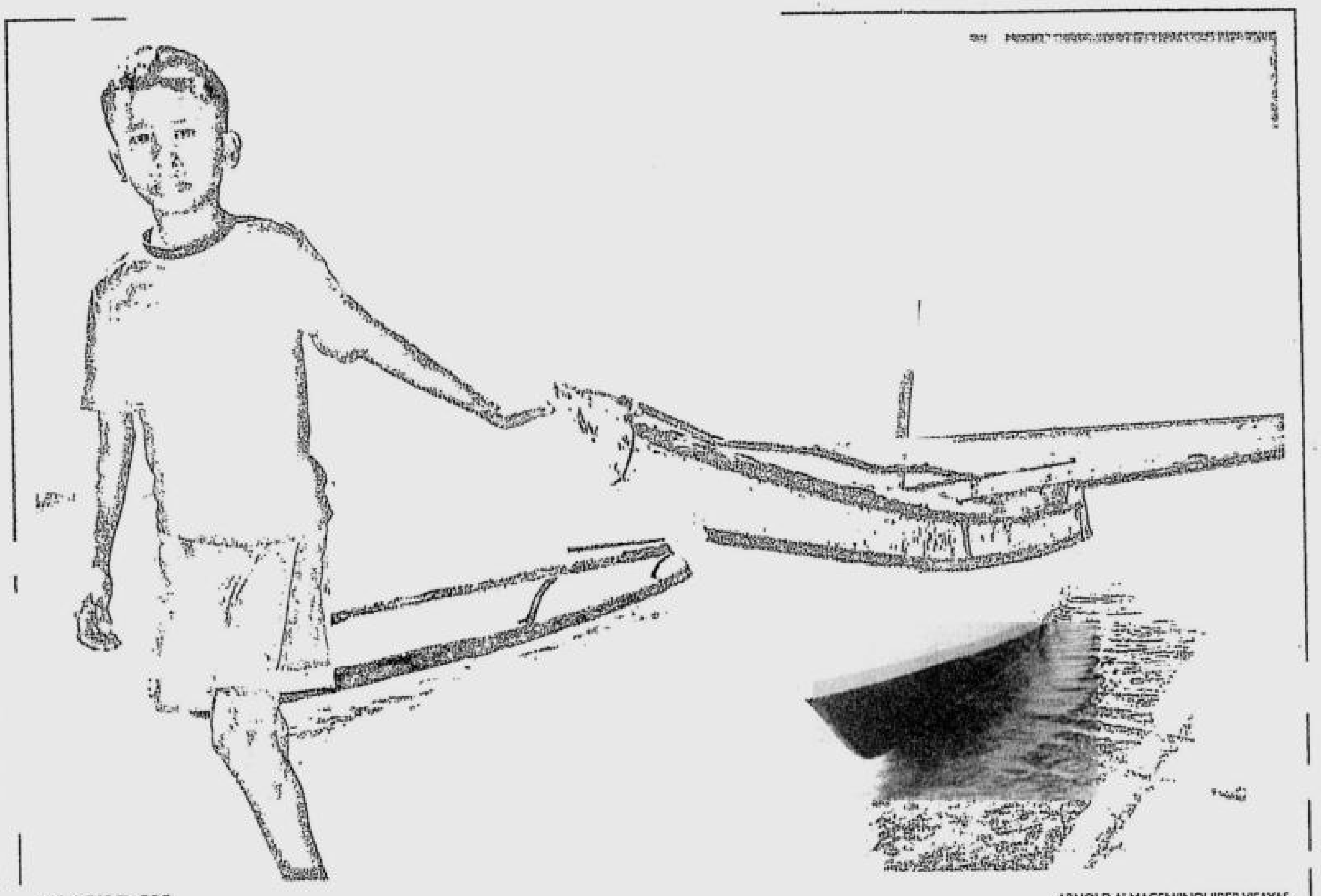
Because of the increase in tax collection, she said, the IRA share of local government units would also increase.

She announced that the national government now has an additional P15 billion of IRA for the LGUs.

She said that with an increase in IRA, LGUs would now have more money to help the poorest of the poor in their areas.

She specifically mentioned the payment of health premiums for the poor.

Ms Arroyo arrived in Cebu at noon Thursday and attended the Women's Congress held at the Cebu provincial capitol.



ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

SLOW DAY
It's normal for children in Barangay Tando in Guimaras to help their parents fish, but the yield from the sea following the Petron oil spill has not returned to its normal levels prior to the environmental disaster. Fishermen nowadays spend six hours at sea but come home with barely a kilogram of fish at the end of the day.

Priest dies of heart attack in protest rally

A PRIEST DIED OF A HEART ATtack in Sorsogon City while attending a rally against extra-judicial killings in Sorsogon province.

Msgr. Francisco Monje said Fr. Josefino Chavenia complained of chest pains as the prayer rally was about to end around 11:45 a.m. at the provincial capitol.

Chavenia was taken to the Sorsogon Doctor's Hospital where he died about two hours later.

Monje said his brother, Dr. Norberto Monje, tried to revive Chavenia.

Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes, who led the rally, expressed grief over Chavenia's death, saying it was very unfortunate that it occurred during the "rally for life."

Chavenia, 58, served in various capacities in the diocese and was the parish priest of Bulan town when he died.

The Sorsogon diocese organized the prayer rally to protest continued killings of militants in the province.

In a phone interview, Bastes said the continued killings has sown fear among the people of Sorsogon. *Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Ombudsman to expand probe of ₱200,000 each lampposts

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

A GRANDIOSE reception awaited delegates to the Asean summit in Cebu. At least P2 billion of public funds were spent for the hosting of the summit, including for lampposts that cost as much as P200,000 each.

CDN PHOTO

CEBU CITY—OMBUDSMAN Merceditas N. Gutierrez yesterday ordered the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman to expand the investigation of the alleged overpricing of decorative lampposts to include other transactions at the 12th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit.

Gutierrez told reporters that the fact-finding inquiry, initiated by the local antigraft office, would also look into other expenditures, such as the infrastructure road pavement and repair, asphalting and other beautification projects.

The Ombudsman Visayas is conducting an investigation of the street lighting project undertaken last December, which involved the installation of 1,800 lampposts, 124 of which were installed in Mandaue City. The rest were installed in the cities of Cebu and Lapu-Lapu.

The lampposts were installed in the so-called "ceremonial routes"—the streets traversed by summit delegates and heads of states from their hotels to the conference venues.

Earlier, the whistle-blower in the DPWH street lighting project, Crisologo Saavedra, said his own inquiry with suppliers showed that the unit cost for each lamppost was only P11,000 or P33,000 with shipping and installation.

Marlina Alviso, regional DPWH assistant director, revealed on Monday at a hearing called by the Visayas Ombudsman that the lampposts installed in Mandaue cost P224,000 each. Those installed in Cebu City cost P85,000 each, she said, not P95,000 as earlier reported.

The DPWH has allocated P120 million for the street lighting project but only 15 percent has so far been paid to the suppliers.

Should the result of the inquiry reveal that there were irregularities in the disbursement of the multibillion-peso Asean summit budget, the antigraft office would conduct a full administrative and criminal investigation, Gutierrez said.

"I like to assure the public that all the allegations concerning the irregularities and anomalies in all the transactions would be looked into by the office," she said.

Gutierrez was here to attend the two-day Philippine Development Forum at the Marco Polo Hotel, Cebu City.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya yesterday said the national government has allotted P2 billion for the 12th Asean summit.

Out of the P2 billion, the Department of Budget and Management allocated around P800 million for the Department of Public Works and Highways, he said.

Lawyer Delfin Aguilar, Central Visayas regional director of the Commission and Audit, said the COA technical department is already conducting a post audit investigation of other transactions related to the Asean summit expenditures.

Legarda seeks backing for Davao industries

DAVAO CITY—FORMER SEN. Loren Legarda started wooing Davaoeños' votes by calling on the national government and Congress to come up with policies and laws that will increase support for medium and small-scale industries in the city.

Legarda said Davao, as a commercial hub, holds a distinct advantage because its airport and seaport are both up to par with international standards. She said Davao has come a long way into becoming a sprawling investment and tourism hub.

"Much more can be achieved by Davao if it will get ample support from the national government and from Congress, which need to pass laws that will nurture small and medium scale industries and other economic measures that are badly needed," she said.

"Like Cebu and Manila, Davao has also become one of the centers of business processing in the country because of the professionalism of its workforce, which boasts of fluency in speaking the English language," she added.

LEGARDA pressing the flesh in a campaign rally in Davao City.

BING GONZALES/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Legarda, who's running to return to the Senate under the Genuine Opposition, also cited a CITEM report that says Davao, as "the capital of the region nicknamed Silicon Gulf and is projected to earn at least $5 billion in annual revenues by 2010."

"However, economic growth should trickle down to the people for it to be relevant. And I'm speaking for the whole of the Philippines, not only Davao," she said.

Legarda said Davao City is not only the largest city in the Philippines in terms of land area but one of its most progressive as well.

"Davao is the de facto capital and business center of Mindanao for a number of reasons, not the least of which is its most productive people and bountiful natural resources," she said.

Retired teacher files bid to enter gov race vs 'jueteng,' quarry scam

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A retired teacher has joined the gubernatorial race in Pampanga, making it a three-cornered fight that was earlier thought to be just a showdown between the son of Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid and wife of suspected jueteng lord, Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

Edna Mangalus-Guillermo, 53, filed her certificate of candidacy on Feb. 21, according to Commission on Elections provincial supervisor Temmy Lambino.

"I am aware that I am in for a big fight," Guillermo said in a telephone interview from Barangay Pasig in Candaba town.

"I want to serve not only 400 students but 4 million constituents in Pampanga," she said.

Guillermo retired on Feb. 2 from the Pasig High School to prepare for her first bid for public office.

Asked what or who pushed her to run, she said it was the "perennial problem of poverty."

She sees a winning chance of "95 percent" against reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid and Board Member Lilia Pineda because, she said, she was running on a "strong antipoverty platform."

"Politicians have failed in getting us out of poverty. In fact, they want us to remain poor all our lives to be able to exploit us during elections. I will cut that cycle of poverty," Guillermo, a mother of five, said.

She claimed to have been writing letters to President Macapagal-Arroyo since February 2004, advising her on poverty alleviation programs and on such matters as the "Batasan 6" and on political killings. The Batasan 6 refers to six party-list representatives who the Arroyo administration accused of conniving with rebel soldiers in February 2006.

Guillermo's supposed adviser role to the President could not be immediately confirmed.

She said she would eradicate poverty by making education accessible to all people, including senior citizens, and pouring big resources on agricultural support to farmers.

Guillermo also said she would put a stop to the illegal numbers game "jueteng" and theft of revenue from quarrying—issues linked to Governor Lapid and Board Member Pineda but which the two have denied on a number of instances.

"[Pampanga] has the problem of jueteng since 1942. If that's a person, he would have been 65 years old and due for retirement. The Americans introduced education but did not stop jueteng that is eating away the money of the poor people," she said.

Asked where she would get her campaign funds, Guillermo said Ms Arroyo and senatorial candidate and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, whom she described as her estranged husband's friend, have not yet given her money.

She said she goes around Pampanga by riding in jeeps to talk to mayors, village leaders and residents to convince them to vote for her.

She said she could not count on her retirement money because she previously used it for a housing loan. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

CPP, NPA face terror tag

From page A1

The law allows the "proscription (or banning) of terrorist organizations, association or groups of persons," a job that will fall under the Department of Justice, Blancaflor said.

3 elements

Section 17 of the law authorizes a regional trial court, through a DOJ application, to declare a group or an organization as terrorist, he said.

Blancaflor said three elements were needed for someone to be classified as terrorist, under the new law.

These are: 1) the person commits any of 12 offenses under the Revised Penal Code, 2) his act creates widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace, and 3) the offense is committed to coerce the government to give in to an unlawful demand.

12 offenses

The 12 offenses under the penal code are piracy in general and mutiny in the high seas, rebellion, coup d'etat, murder, kidnapping and serious illegal detention, arson and violations of the laws on toxic substances and hazardous and nuclear wastes, atomic energy regulatory and liability, antihijacking, antipiracy, and crimes involving illegal possession, manufacture, acquisition or disposition of firearms, ammunitions or explosives.

Asked whether the CPP-NPA could be considered a terrorist group under the new law, Blancaflor said: "Based on their previous actuations, yes, as we have seen, as we have felt, as the whole country has actually been affected, yes."

Freezing bank accounts

He said CPP-NPA acts that could fall under the antiterror law included arson, murder, illegal possession of firearms, "the murder of a barangay captain which creates fear in the community, and their illegal demand for subverting the country."

"Running after terrorists is not just dismantling their groups," Blancaflor said.

He noted that before the country had an antiterror law, the government could only run against terrorists after they struck. But this will not be the case once the law takes effect, he said.

"With this law, we have surveillance and then we can proceed to the preparation stage. We can get enough information against them to interdict them, to prevent them from furthering the crime or altogether freeze their (bank) accounts," Blancaflor said.

Amendments needed

He said that once the CPP-NPA was declared a terrorist group, those proven to be its members could face six months in jail.

If it is proven that besides being members, they also espouse terrorism, they could face up to four years in jail, he added.

But even this early, Blancaflor said the law needed certain amendments, based on feedback from some lawmakers.

He said one of the amendments could be lowering the payment for damages for those wrongly accused of terrorism.

Under the law, those wrongly accused of the crime could be awarded damages amounting to half a million pesos for every day of detention.

Blancaflor said the amount was impractical and suggested that the amount be lowered to P20,000 for every day of detention with a cap of P2 million.

Assurance to media

Blancaflor also assured the media that they could not be charged with violating the antiterror law if in the course of doing their job they were able to get prior information about a terrorist act or the location of a terrorist suspect hiding from law enforcers.

"It's another story if they are hiding the terrorists or if they were paid or they profited from it," Blancaflor said.

He urged the media to sit down with the task force and come up with a position paper that would address their concerns.

Joker tells military: Stop digging into past cases

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

TEAM UNITY SENATORIAL candidate Joker Arroyo yesterday strongly urged the military to stop digging into past cases involving Leftist leaders, saying the latest arrest warrants issued against them were "grievously wrong."

"The Armed services must restrain itself from digging into the past which was intended to be buried by past administrations," Arroyo said in a statement.

The senator said: "There is something grievously wrong with the standing warrants for the arrest of Congressman Satur Ocampo and others and the continued detention of Congressman Crispin Beltran particularly for crimes allegedly committed before Edsa or during the martial law years."

Arroyo noted that during the presidencies, both Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos adopted policies that "were designed to put to rest the past adventurisms of the Left and Right."

Aquino immediately lifted President Ferdinand Marcos' suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus while Ramos backed the repeal of the antisubversion law.

Arroyo reminded the military that Ramos' policy benefited not only the communists but "equally benefited the military rebels who rebelled against President Aquino ... and even enabled the detained Gringo Honasan to run and win a seat in the Senate."

He urged the military to "rethink its position."

"It has a responsibility to protect the State and the people from current elements that would want to subvert its authority," Arroyo said. "At the same time, it has also a duty to adhere to established government policy that what is past is past, otherwise, there will be no stability in government policy."

Joma, Satur: We were in jail during killings

From page A1

"nothing to do with politics or the elections."

Sison, now chief political consultant of the National Democratic Front and living in exile in the Netherlands, and Echanis said they could not have been involved because they were then under detention by security forces of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

In a strongly worded statement from Utrecht, Sison said he was under maximum security detention by the military from 1977 to 1985.

"I was never in any position from 1984 to 1986 or at any other time to sign any kind of order to kill people in Leyte or elsewhere in the Philippines," he said. He said his position as CPP chair ended when he was arrested in 1977.

Figment of imagination

Echanis said the murder case against him was "utterly baseless and malicious."

"This murder charge is no less than a figment of the dirty imagination of Ms Arroyo's cabal of generals," Echanis said.

Echanis spoke to reporters across the street from a plaza near the Commission on Elections, while militant groups were holding a protest rally.

In a press statement, Echanis said he was arrested without warrant in 1983 and for over a year, was detained in solitary confinement in Camp Aguinaldo.

From 1984 to 1986, Echanis said he was held in a stockade at Camp Adduri in Region 2 until his release in March 1986.

Anakpawis vice chair and Kilusang Mayo Uno secretary general for external and political affairs Rafael Baylosis also denied allegations he was involved in the killings.

"This is political repression, clear as day," Baylosis said.

Ocampo has also denied the murder charges, also stressing that he was being held in a military stockade at the time of the supposed killings. He was detained for rebellion in 1976 but escaped nine years later.

Low profile

Ocampo's congressional colleague, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño, said the wanted lawmaker would come out in the open shortly and wait for government officers to arrest him.

Meanwhile, Ocampo will keep a low profile while preparing for his legal defense, Casiño said.

"Honestly, I have no idea where he is. Only he knows where he is. He knows what he's doing. He has experience. He has to make himself scarce," Casiño said in a telephone interview.

Shortly after calling a press briefing on Thursday to denounce the arrest warrant against him, Ocampo turned his mobile phone off, stopped contact with the Bayan Muna staff, and only communicated with his lawyer and a select few "on a need to know basis."

Skeletal remains

"That's part of the reason," Casiño said, when asked if Ocampo turned off his cell phone to avoid detection by the police or military. "At the same time, he wants to focus on his options. You also need that kind of space, while keeping minimal contact [with the others]."

Ocampo, Sison, National Democratic Front leader Luis Jalandoni, and 50 others had been ordered arrested by a Leyte judge on multiple murder charges arising from the discovery of a mass grave of executed former rebels in Inopacan town in August last year.

Military investigators claimed that the 67 skeletal remains dug up from the mass grave were victims of a CPP purge of suspected spies in the 1980s.

Only 15 remains were identified by their relatives.

Ocampo was only exercising caution to avoid suffering the fate of detained Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran, Casiño said.

"He's learning from the experience of Ka Bel," Casiño said, referring to Beltran, who was arrested by police in February last year for rebellion and remains in detention.

Ready to face charges

Ocampo's lawyer Romeo Capulong said the lawmaker was busy digging up and sifting documents related to the cases filed against him in the past, so he could prepare for his defense in the new cases filed against him.

"He's not with me," Capulong said in a phone interview. "We haven't talked since yesterday."

Once he and the lawyers have prepared his defense, Ocampo will come out and submit himself to the court, Capulong said.

"He will make himself visible and wait for the arrest," he said. "He's ready to face the charges because he's innocent, and he's confident that the limited democratic and legal space will be sufficient for him to be acquitted."

In his statement, Sison described the charges as a "harbinger of worse times" with the forthcoming implementation of the antiterror law.

Sison said the judge who issued the arrest warrants "proves himself either as a helpless tool of the Arroyo regime and the military or practically an ignoramus in Philippine law by conveniently forgetting that the prescription cases of murder is 20 years." *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Jerome Aning and Tina Santos*

Bayan Muna continues to gain strength, says Casiño

By Tarra Quismundo

THE MILITANT PARTY-LIST group Bayan Muna continues to gain strength despite the warrant of arrest issued against its leader, Rep. Satur Ocampo.

At a meeting with the INQUIRER Thursday night, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño said the group was unfazed despite "a political agenda and an anti-insurgency agenda working together" to quell it.

"We feel that—and this is the principle that we are working on—there is no stopping Bayan Muna. All the surveys point to a repeat of 2001 [and] 2004, when we topped the elections," Casiño said .

"And if anything, what they did to Satur can only enhance the party more, because the more we are attacked by this administration, the more we become credible to the people," he said.

Ocampo is facing arrest for 22-year-old murders in a remote town in Leyte, a case brought to court just two months away from the May elections.

His indictment stemmed from a complaint filed by the military for the discovery of 67 skeletal remains in Sapang Daku, Barangay Caulisihan in Inopacan town, all alleged victims of a purge by the Communist Party of the Philippines two decades ago.

Encouraged by public opinion polls showing Bayan Muna's increasing popularity among the electorate, Casiño said "[the group's] trajectory is already clear" in terms of victory in the elections.

"We will continue with our campaign as planned," he said, adding:

"Probably, we will just make up for sorties where Satur won't make it. But this will not derail us. It cannot derail us. In the party-list system, you vote for the party, not for Satur Ocampo. So even if your standard-bearer is gone, what's important is the party."

According to Casiño, the conventional view of the Left has changed through history—a shift that Bayan Muna attributes to its active role in serving as the people's voice against oppression, whether in the streets or in Congress.

"In my view, as far as the ordinary folk are concerned, we are part of the political mainstream and we are looked upon more as critics of President Arroyo rather than as communists masquerading as congressmen," Casiño said.

Impact on justice system

"It has been a long time since martial law, when a good communist was a dead communist. This time, people are more discerning, and they can see through the propaganda that the military is dishing out," he said, adding that "if the communist bogey were such a powerful influence," Bayan Muna would not have topped the 2001 and 2004 party-list elections.

Thus, instead of working for seats in the House of Representatives, Bayan Muna will be focusing on Ocampo's case, which the group described as a clear attempt to "marginalize" it.

Bayan Muna, allies leading ...

From page A1

occupied by Rep. Mujiv Hataman.

Bayan Muna's Ocampo is facing arrest for the alleged killing of communist rebels more than two decades ago. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Based on the results of the same survey, some groups are poised to gain more seats, like Gabriela, which will gain two, and Anakpawis and An Waray, which will each gain one.

Gabriela is represented by Liza Maza, Anakpawis by Crispin Beltran and Rafael Mariano, and An Waray by Florencio Noel.

Some may end up losing a seat, like Akbayan, which is represented by Mario Aguja, Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel and Etta Rosales.

A party or group meeting the 2-percent rule is entitled to seats in the House of Representatives in proportion to its share in the total party-list votes. A party or group can occupy a maximum of three seats.

"The SWS survey points to a possible 19 seats so far out of the maximum 55 seats allotted for party-list groups [in the May elections]," SWS said in a statement the other day.

Error margin

The survey conducted on Feb. 24-27 nationwide had a sampling error margin of plus-minus 3 percentage points. But an SWS analyst said the effect of the margin of error was not discussed in the survey firm's news release posted on its website at http://www.sws.org.ph.

"We just counted all of those who were above the 2 [percent], the threshold ... We just did the arithmetic without assuming any error," SWS president Mahar Mangahas said in an interview with ANC channel last night.

In an addendum released yesterday, SWS said it had deleted the line containing the sampling error margins of plus-minus 3 percentage points from the survey background.

"Allowing for sampling error, with a survey outcome of 3.0 percent or more, it is statistically safe to say that a party has truly reached the threshold of 2 percent. On the other hand, a survey outcome of below 1 percent makes it statistically very unlikely that the threshold has in truth been reached," SWS said in the addendum.

Marginalized sectors

The party-list system was introduced by the framers of the 1987 Constitution to allow representation for small political parties and marginalized sectors in the House, which is traditionally dominated by parties with a big political machinery.

The Commission on Elections has so far accredited 37 parties to vie for 55 seats on May 14.

Possible loss of place

The Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec), Buhay, Butil Farmers Party (Butil), Partido ng Manggagawa (PM), Coop Natco, Citizen's Battle Against Corruption (Cibac), Ang Laban ng Indigenong Filipino (Alif), Alliance of Volunteer Educators (Ave) and Alagad may end up losing their place in Congress altogether, SWS said.

Apec is represented by Sunny Rose Madamba, Ernesto Pablo and Edgar Valdez; Buhay by Christian Señeres and Rene Velarde; Butil by Leonila Chavez; Coop Natco by Guillermo Cua; Cibac by Emmanuel Joel Villanueva; Alif by Acmad Tomawis; Ave by Eulogio Magsaysay; Alagad by Rodante Marcoleta, and PM by Renato Magtubo.

Newcomers Aangat Tayo and Aba-Ako are poised to gain two seats and one seat, respectively.

The survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews with 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

CURRENT PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVES

Party-list	Number of seats	Members
Akbayan	3	Aguja, Mario 'Mayong' Joyo Hontiveros-Baraquel, Ana Theresia 'Risa' Rosales, Loretta Ann
Alagad	1	Marcoleta, Rodante D.
Alif	1	Tomawis, Acmad M.
Amin	1	Hataman, Mujiv
An Waray	1	Noel, Florencio 'Bem' G.
Anak Pawis	2	Beltran, Crispin B. Mariano, Rafael V.
Apec	3	Madamba, Sunny Rose A. Pablo, Ernesto 'Ernie' C. Valdez, Edgar L.
Ave	1	Magsaysay, Eulogio 'Amang' R. , Ph.D.
Bayan Muna	3	Casiño, Teodoro A. Ocampo, Satur C. Virador, Joel G.
Buhay	2	Señeres, Christian M. Velarde, Rene M.
Butil	1	Chavez , Leonila V.
Cibac	1	Villanueva, Emmanuel Joel J.
Coop Natco	1	Cua, Guillermo P.
Gabriela	1	Maza, Liza L.
Partido ng Manggagawa	1	Magtubo, Renato 'Ka Rene' B.

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ELECTION '07

No way for Team Unity to go but up–Defensor

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

IS TEAM UNITY IN DENIAL about its chances in the May 14 elections?

Despite discouraging results from the Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey which showed that only three—Ralph Recto, Tito Sotto III, and Joker Arroyo—are in the Magic 12, Team Unity members are hardly showing any signs of demoralization in their ranks as they continued their Pulong Sulong campaign sorties yesterday in Rizal province.

"There's no way to go but up," said senatorial candidate Michael Defensor. "We had campaigned only for one week and a half when the survey was conducted and the Pulong Sulong was not in place. We expect to see a big leap in our ratings once the campaign season goes deeper. We're in a good position considering there are still two months to go."

Miguel Zubiri said he was satisfied with his ranking at No. 17 in the SWS rating. "I started at 37 in December and 26 in January. I think I really need to step up my personal campaigns in the Visayas and Mindanao where I believe I have the biggest room for improvement. I'm confident that as more people see me in person, they'd know me better," said Zubiri.

No backing out

Sotto said surveys were woefully inaccurate based on his experience as a two-term senator. "You can be No. 24 and be No. 12 in a month's time. You can't depend on the senatorial surveys just like presidential surveys," said Sotto who said the surveys were skewed in favor of incumbent senators.

Norma Japitana, campaign manager of Cesar Montano, said his ward was satisfied with his No. 18 ranking considering that the survey was made just two weeks after Montano joined Team Unity as a last-minute replacement.

"We're currently meeting with veteran politicians to help us establish a national network as fast as we can. Cesar is not backing out," said Japitana.

Even Sultan Jamalul Kiram III, who was ranked below alleged nuisance candidates, was unperturbed, saying he could commission any survey and he would come out on top.

Her No. 22 ranking also failed to break the stride of Tessie Aquino-Oreta, who continued to pitch for her favorite advocacy, education, in various schools and communities she had been too.

The former chair of the Senate committee on education called for the increase the budget share of education, making it "at least equal to 6 percent of the total value of the Philippine gross national product (GNP)."

"The government, to sustain economic growth, must invest more on education," she said.

She added that it was "absolutely necessary that a one-time P30 billion Special Education Fund for Basic Education be provided to build more schools and classrooms, reduce class size, hire enough teachers, and address all other backlogs in the system."

"Time is running out, we cannot just sit back and watch the fast deteriorating performance of our public school system due to decades of neglect," Aquino-Oreta said. "We have to save our schools to give a better opportunity for the next generation of Filipinos."

Shame on drug traffickers

Sotto also pressed his favorite issue—drugs. He called on the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) to revive the shame campaign against illegal drug manufacturers and traffickers who continue to evade the law and run their illicit operations in the country.

He also called on concerned citizens to take advantage of the PDEA's Operation Private Eye program that rewards people who provides detailed information on illegal drug activities in their respective communities.

"Let us put a face and identity to these people and get the public involved in hunting them down and putting them behind bars where they rightfully belong," Sotto said in a press statement.

The PDEA has listed 17 most wanted illegal drug manufacturers and traffickers of illegal drugs, mostly Chinese nationals. They are Wang Ya Shi, Henry Tan y Tamayo, Deng Xiao Li, Ong Kim Tie, Qui Yun Hai, Jackson Uy, Benito Sze, Lin Tsung Huan, Randy Chua y Ngo, Ong Shin Pin, Ding Chai Hui, Ronald Yao y Cruz, Wen Jin Cai, Chua Lin Yen, Cehn Jian Long and Juanito Lee Ty.

Sotto reminded the public to avail themselves of the reward program of PDEA and provide valuable information that will lead to the arrest suspected drug lords and the seizure of their illegal drugs.

"Our people are entitled to rewards and incentives and I think this is the best way to get as many ordinary citizens involved in our war against the drug menace," he said.

Erap asks all GO bets to join sorties in South

By Norman Bordadora

DAVAO DEL NORTE—DETAINED former president Joseph Estrada yesterday called on candidates of the Genuine Opposition to again come in full force in its forthcoming rallies in major cities such as Cebu and Cagayan de Oro.

Estrada made the call from his estate-detention in Tanay, Rizal after receiving news reports as well as direct information from opposition leaders that GO's Davao City rally was an achievement in terms of candidates' complete attendance and the crowd that showed up.

"Many people still love me. I guess (the opposition's candidates) will still heed me if I ask them to all go to the rallies," Estrada told the INQUIRER.

GO candidates former Sen John Osmeña, Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, former Sen. Loren Legarda and Sonia Roco followed up on the Davao City rally by campaigning in Compostela Valley and Davao del Norte yesterday.

No Iloilo repeat

"(I'm asking them to all go) in the major cities like Cebu City and Cagayan," said Estrada, the avowed leader of the opposition despite his continued detention on plunder charges.

"There should be no repeat of what happened in Iloilo. It's not good to see," he added.

GO's rally in Iloilo City, supposedly the first provincial sortie, was cancelled due to unverified security threats.

It was Estrada who ensured that all GO candidates would attend the GO's Mindanao kickoff held on Thursday night in Davao City's Rizal Plaza.

Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who attended the Davao City rally despite initially begging off, confirmed to the INQUIRER that Estrada called up each candidate to ask that they attend the first GO rally in Mindanao.

Even detained Antonio Trillanes III was represented by a proxy.

The estimated 3,000 who showed up at the plaza area approximates that of Plaza Miranda in Manila where the opposition held its proclamation rally last Feb. 24.

"My friends in Davao City are still there. The members of my campaign team, those in (the women's group) Mare, they are all still there. There are those who have yet to forget me," Estrada said.

Estrada said he would make the same calls to the GO candidates when campaign rallies are held in Cebu City and Cagayan de Oro City.

'Real' No. 1

"That can easily be done," said former Sen. John Osmeña, a Cebuano, of Estrada's request that all candidates be together once again for the Cebu and Cagayan de Oro rallies.

Those who received the loudest applause during the approximately two-hour rally were Lacson, former Senator Loren Legarda, and young candidates Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero and Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.

"If you elect the Genuine Opposition, we will make sure that your Senate will not be dissolved," Lacson said.

Legarda was introduced as the "real No. 1" senator by GO campaign manager Joseph Victor Ejercito, a day after the latest Social Weather Stations survey showed erstwhile GO candidate reelectionist Sen. Francis Pangilinan taking the No. 1 spot previously held by Legarda.

As this developed, the United Opposition party headed by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay has so far enlisted 85 congressional candidates, including his 30-year-old daughter who will run for Makati's 2nd congressional district.

UNO on Monday filed a petition before the Commission on Elections asking to be recognized as the "dominant minority party" and entitled to an official copy of the election returns.

UNO is at the core of the Genuine Opposition coalition that includes factions of the Liberal Party (LP), Nacionalista Party (NP), Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) and Aksyon Demokratiko.

As of March 6, UNO has finalized candidates in 85 out of 212 congressional districts that include 22 incumbent congressmen, 10 ex-congressmen and relatives of sitting elective officials.

The list includes Binay's daughter Marlen Abigail, a lawyer, who will try to replace outgoing Makati 2nd district Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino who is in his third and last term.

The list also includes Sorsogon Vice Governor Antonio Escudero who will run for the post to be vacated by his nephew, Francis Escudero.

In Taguig, Rep. Alan Cayetano will field his wife, Lani.

Ex-senator Ernesto Maceda, a member of the "executive committee" of UNO, said they expect to field at least 160 congressional candidates. *With a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

Kumon Asia & Oceania

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Last March 3, 2007, Kumon Philippines Inc. convened all their program completers for their first Kumon Completers' Club Conference at the College of Saint Benilde Hotel and International Conference Center.

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Tigers whip Giants, gain solo PBA lead

GAMES TOMORROW *(Araneta Coliseum)*
4:05 p.m.—Welcoat vs. Sta. Lucia
6:30 p.m.—Alaska vs. Barangay Ginebra

By Musong R. Castillo

COCA-COLA CLIMBED OUT OF A DEEP hole early and finished off Purefoods with a flurry to clinch the solo lead in the PBA Fiesta Cup with a 98-81 decision last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Anthony Johnson kept the Tigers in the game with 33 points, while John Arigo drilled in 13 of his 20 in the final frame for the coup de grace as Coca-Cola recovered from 21 points down to nail its second straight victory.

While the Tigers labored hard, defending champion Red Bull had a relatively easier time in improving to 2-0 after a 102-84 romp of San Miguel Beer in the nightcap.

James Penny, whom Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao later described "as the yardstick to whom all imports will be measured," scored 10 points in the first period and finished with 23, with Carlo Sharma chipping in 18 and Mike Hrabak 13.

The debuting Beermen were without Nationals Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros and injured starters Danny Ildefonso and Lordy Tugade.

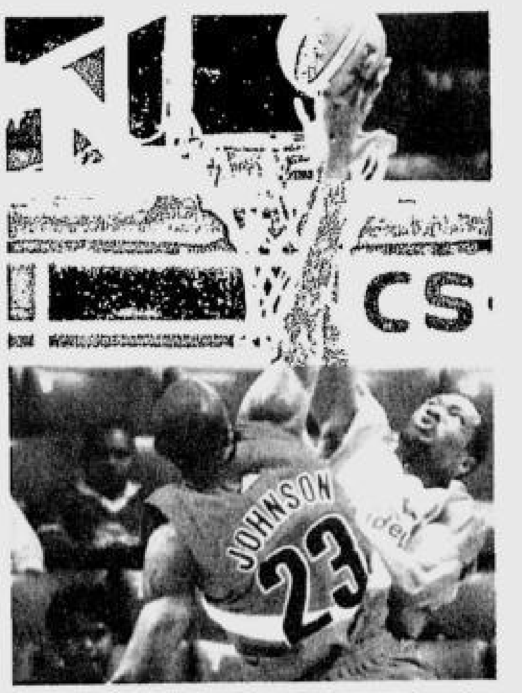
Late Sports

William Antonio chipped in 19 markers for the Tigers as the Tender Juicy Giants went down for the second straight game.

The 6-foot-3 shooting guard scored 15 of his total in the final two periods, his third and last three-pointer coming at the 1:25 mark that put the game to bed, 91-79.

Purefoods, runner-up to Red Bull and James Penny here last year, finished with a whimper by scoring just two points in the final 4:42.

The Tigers trailed at 0-14 before their first field goal came at the 5:41 mark on a Johnson layup.



PUREFOODS' Jesse King blocks the shot of Coca-Cola's Anthony Johnson in their game won by the Tigers last night. ROMY HOMILLADA

But Coca-Cola fought hard as Johnson scored 14 points in the second quarter, while all of Purefoods' guns suddenly jammed.

Purefoods import Jesse King scored 18 of his night-high 34 in the first period.

The scores:

First Game

COCA-COLA 98—Johnson 33, Arigo 20, Antonio 19, Peek 11, Yeo 10, Miranda 4, Pacana 1, Caceres 0, Sotto 0, Avenido 0, Misolas 0.

PUREFOODS 81—King 34, J. Yap 19, Simon 9, Camaso 5, Salvador 4, Artadi 4, Yee 4, Evangelista 2, R. Yap 0, Castillo 0.

Quarters: 10-31, 40-47, 63-67, 98-81

SECOND GAME

RED BULL BARAKO 102—Penny 23, Sharma 18, Hrabak 13, Bagulo 10, Bugia 9, Najorda 6, Valenzuela 6, Membrebre 5, Fonacier 5, Alvarez 4, Ybanez 3, Cruz 0

SAN MIGUEL 84—Pena 17, Tenorio 15, Cablay 14, Massiah 11, Calaguio 9, Adducul 8, Espinas 5, Racela 4, Gonzales 1, Wilson 0, Adriano 0

Quarters: 29-20, 53-38, 77-56, 102-84

Court asked to cite Leviste, docs for indirect contempt

DOJ says parties defied return-to-jail order

By Leila B. Salaverria and Dj Yap

THE MAKATI REGIONAL COURT was asked to cite former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste and his doctors for indirect contempt for failing to return Leviste to the city jail.

Department of Justice Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco also asked the Makati RTC to order Leviste's return to his detention cell at the Makati city jail immediately.

On the other hand, Leviste asked yesterday a Makati court to defer his arraignment on March 21 pending the resolution of his application for bail.

Leviste faces a murder charge for allegedly killing long-time aide Rafael de las Alas. The former governor is supposed to be detained at the city jail while his case is being heard.

He has been confined at the Makati Medical Center since Feb. 23 after falling ill.

Leviste was treated for hypertension or high blood pressure and gastrointestinal bleeding.

According to Velasco, Leviste had not returned to the city jail as of yesterday morning despite statements to the court by his doctors, Reynato Kasilag and Ramon Liboro, that the former governor was ready to be discharged on March 7.

A doctor from the National Bureau of Investigation, Cesar Bisquera, corroborated the physicians' statements.

Velasco also said the Makati RTC issued an order March 6 directing the Makati City Jail warden to return Leviste to his cell immediately upon discharge from the hospital.

The actions of Leviste and the doctors, Velasco said, were in clear violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution.

In view of these moves, Velasco said Leviste and the doctors should be cited for indirect contempt of the court.

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Mayor seeks new date for bridge closure

By Nancy C. Carvajal

VALENZUELA CITY MAYOR Sherwin Gatchalian is asking for a postponement in the temporary closure of Tullahan Bridge, scheduled for March 16, until a more efficient rerouting scheme has been drawn up.

The 73-year-old bridge connecting the cities of Valenzuela, Malabon and Manila to Bulacan could collapse if not repaired immediately, according to the Department of Public Works and Highways.

The DPWH plans to raise the bridge by two meters more to address the flooding problem during the rainy season and during high tide, making the bridge impassable to light vehicles.

"It was evident during the dry-run that the proposed rerouting scheme is insufficient to handle the volume of vehicles using the MacArthur Highway. We could not simply close this major thoroughfare without a feasible alternative for motorists," Gatchalian said.

The DPWH and Metro Manila Development Authority, however, have not yet replied to the request he sent Wednesday.

Gatchalian stopped the dry-run last Tuesday when traffic stood still and hundreds of motorists and commuters were stranded.

Alternate route

Gatchalian said the problem stemmed from the fact that a portion of the alternate route, M.H. del Pilar, was still under construction.

With residents of Victoneta Street prohibiting the entry of vehicles in their subdivision, the North Luzon Expressway was the only alternate route for motorists.

But the mayor said the road going to NLEx was not wide enough to accommodate a large number of vehicles.

"Our proposal is for them to delay the closure for about two months until the M.H. del Pilar Street is completed," he said.

"Once that street is passable to heavy vehicles, then the traffic situation along the MacArthur Highway would be manageable," the mayor noted.

In the meantime, the northbound portion of the bridge would be temporarily closed on Monday in preparation for the rehabilitation, even as he waited for the reply of DPWH and MMDA.

Gatchalian said the local government had prepared a rerouting scheme to present to the two agencies.

It is estimated that at least 60,000 vehicles pass through the bridge everyday.

Gatchalian said additional personnel would again be deployed on Monday to deal with problems arising from the closure of a portion of the bridge.

Chief Justice plans to abolish Court of Appeals-Cebu

On Target
Ramon Tulfo

MY MOLE AT THE SUPREME Court says that Chief Justice Reynato Puno is planning to abolish the Court of Appeals branch in Cebu, and transfer it to Manila because of rampant corruption.

Most justices at the CA-Cebu, which has three divisions, can be bought, reports reaching the Chief Justice said. Puno also wants all the cases decided by the CA-Cebu reviewed by the highest court because most of them could have been "tainted." If the CA is tainted, who can we trust with criminal and civil cases on appeal?

* * *

There are two appellate branches outside Manila, one in Cebu City and another in Cagayan de Oro City. These were set up in 2004, with President Macapagal-Arroyo's idea of regionalizing the appellate court.

The idea was broached to her by retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide, who is from Cebu. But apparently because of the distance from Manila and lack of supervision, the CA-Cebu is playing hooky, said my Supreme Court mole. But why does the Chief Justice focus his sights solely on CA-Cebu, when there are also many corrupt CA justices in Manila?

* * *

The government is quick in resolving tax evasion cases against cosmetic surgeons, actors and actresses, but is slow in acting on cases against big time businessmen or personalities.

A case in point is the smuggling complaint and tax evasion cases filed against Oilink International Corp. executive Paul Co and his alleged broker-accomplices Noel Aro, Norman Galera and Rolando Valeriano before the Department of Justice. The police filed a complaint against the four on Feb. 1, 2006, but the DOJ has yet to formally file the case in court.

In a resolution dated April 3, 2006, a DOJ special prosecutor found "probable cause" to charge the four respondents in court.

According to the complaint, alleged oil smuggling by Oilink reached P315 million between 2003 and 2004. In one transaction the CIDG obtained, documents would have required Oilink to pay P7.9 million in taxes.

Oilink is the sister company of fuel retailer Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc.

"We really have a different kind of justice for the rich and powerful," said my CIDG source.

Jose Rizal faces illegal hiring raps

By Jerome Aning

JOSE RIZAL HAS BEEN ARRESTED for allegedly recruiting workers without a license.

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration yesterday said a joint POEA and National Bureau of Investigation team arrested Jose Dadis Rizal, a namesake of the national hero, on Wednesday noon at the Glorietta shopping mall in Makati City.

Lawyer Dominador Salanga, head of the POEA's operations and surveillance division, said 15 of the suspect's alleged victims had filed complaints in the POEA saying they were promised work as apple pickers in New Zealand.

The suspect reportedly collected about P600,000 from victims coming from the provinces.

The suspect was presented for inquest to the Department of Justice's special task force on illegal recruitment last Thursday. He remains in the custody of the NBI.

Last month, President Macapagal-Arroyo issued an executive order making POEA the government's lead agency in the fight against illegal recruitment.

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Trial sets tone for US immigration crackdown

PHILADELPHIA—A PENNSYLVANIA town's efforts to crack down on illegal immigration will be challenged by civil rights campaigners in a landmark federal trial beginning on Monday that could signal whether such local laws across the country can stand up to legal challenge.

Hazleton, a community of about 30,000, set the tone for dozens of other towns across the United States when it passed a law last year imposing penalties on businesses that hire undocumented aliens, and fining landlords who rent to them. The city council also declared English the official language.

Opponents of the law—which has not been implemented because of a court injunction—say it discriminates against anyone who appears to be foreign or who speaks no English. They say it has created a climate of fear where immigrants, whether legal or illegal, have been harassed, businesses have closed, and some people have left town.

Backers of such laws say the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants drive down wages, burden social services, increase crime and fail to assimilate into US society.

About a third of Hazleton's residents are immigrants, mostly from central America. Around a quarter of the immigrant population is thought to be illegal, according to civil rights campaigners.

The trial is the first to test a local immigration law in a US federal court, said Kristina Campbell, a staff attorney with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which is following the case.

Amid stalled efforts by Congress and urging by the White House to enact comprehensive immigration reform, similar measures have been passed or are being considered by around 70 other communities, the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, a plaintiff in the Hazleton suit says.

Cesar Perales, chief counsel of the PRLDEF, said the trial is being watched by many such communities for guidance on whether their laws will survive a court challenge.

"Unless we strike down this type of ordinance, there will be others," Perales told reporters on a conference call.

Other plaintiffs include the American Civil Liberties Union, the Hazleton Hispanic Business Association, and a number of anonymous plaintiffs who say they have lost business or been harassed because of the law.

Kris Kobach, lead attorney for the City of Hazleton, denied the law is discriminatory. He said the law requires officials to reject any claim of illegality based on national origin, race or ethnicity.

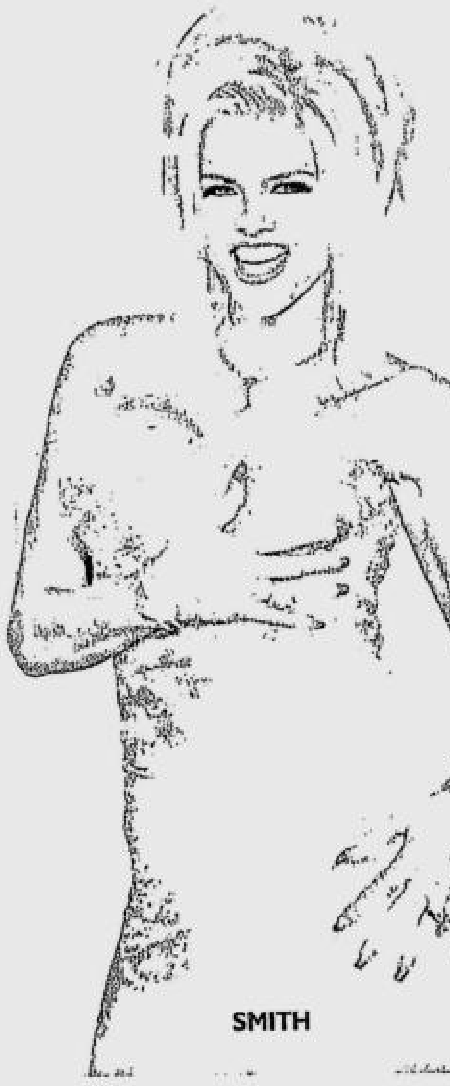
Hazleton Mayor Lou Barletta, who led the campaign for the Illegal Immigration Relief Act Ordinance and has become a national figurehead for anti-illegal immigrant campaigners, said as much as half the town's Hispanic population has left since the law was first passed in July 2006.

"The town has become quieter, there seems to be a calm across the city," Barletta said. He denied that the local economy has been hurt by the exodus.

Kimberly Lopez, a former Hazleton resident, said she and her husband closed their Hispanic grocery store in the town after business halved in response to the law.

"They were running scared," she told Reuters. "A lot of our customers said they were going somewhere else." The trial takes place in the US District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania in Scranton, Pennsylvania before Judge James Munley.

Reuters



SMITH

Smith autopsy report to be delayed because of new evidence

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA—THE RELEASE OF Anna Nicole Smith's autopsy report has been delayed because of new evidence, the Broward County medical examiner said.

Dr. Joshua Perper said Thursday autopsy tests had been completed, but that police had provided the medical examiner with new evidence. He would not say what the evidence was.

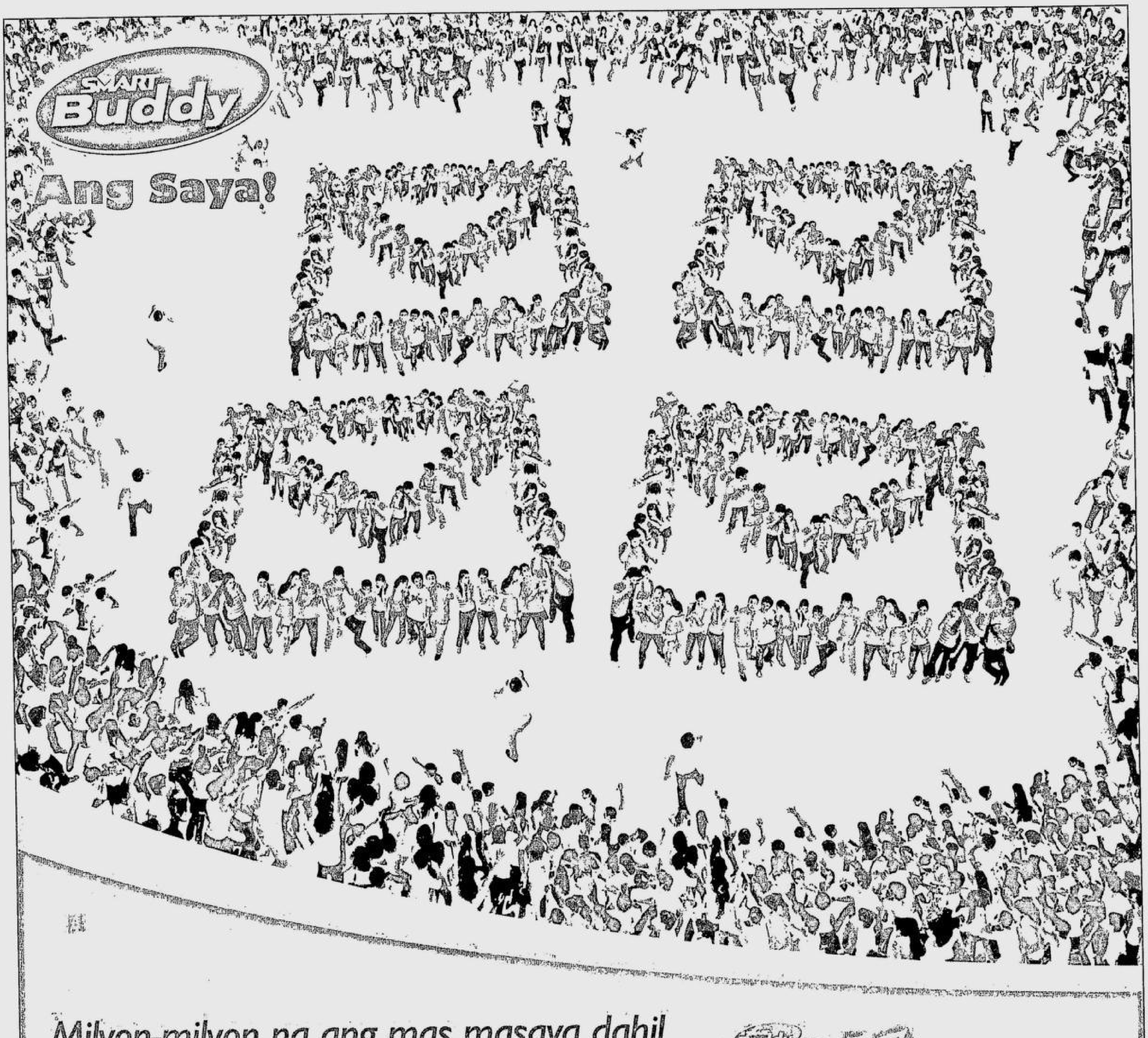
The medical examiner had intended to release the results late this week. He did not say when the release would occur, but his secretary said it was expected in the next week or two.

Telephone calls to the Seminole Police were referred to a tribal spokesperson who did not return calls.

Smith died Feb. 8 after being found unresponsive at a hotel in Hollywood, Florida. A day later, Perper released a preliminary autopsy that showed no immediate indication of a drug overdose and no sign of major external injuries on the 39-year-old former Playboy playmate and reality TV star.

Telephone calls made by The Associated Press to attorneys for Smith's boyfriend Howard K. Stern, mother Virgie Arthur and Larry Birkhead, who claims to be the father of Smith's baby, were not immediately returned.

AP



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EU seeks to seal climate change deal

BRUSSELS—A DRAFT FINAL STATEMENT AT A European Union summit on Friday set a binding target of 20 percent of renewable sources in EU energy consumption by 2020 in an ambitious strategy to fight climate change.

The compromise circulated by EU president Germany offered flexibility on how the 27 member states contribute to the common pan-European goal for renewables such as solar, wind and hydro-electric power.

The wording appeared aimed to win over states reliant on nuclear energy, led by France, or coal, such as Poland, or small countries with few energy resources, such as Cyprus and Malta, by adding references to the national energy mix.

"Differentiated national overall targets" for renewables should be set "with due regard to a fair and adequate allocation taking account of different national starting points," it said.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was hoping to clinch a deal on a long-term strategy integrating energy and climate change to pressure the United States and other industrialized and emerging nations to follow the EU lead in combating global warming.

On Thursday, the 27 leaders committed themselves to an ambitious target of reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions, blamed for heating the planet, by 20 percent by 2020 and offered to go to 30 percent if other nations follow suit.

The draft statement, seen by Reuters, also set a 10 percent minimum target for biofuels in transport to be introduced by 2020 in a cost-efficient way.

In an attempt to balance pro- and antinuclear states, the draft added wording on the contribution of nuclear energy "in meeting growing concerns about safety of energy supply and CO2 emissions reductions while ensuring that nuclear safety and security are paramount in the decision-making process."

Leaders came close to a deal on renewables on Thursday but several countries sought assurances that their special circumstances and financial limits would be taken into account when sharing the burden of meeting an EU-wide target.

Merkel told a midnight news conference the strategy "will put us in a position to show the international community that Europe is playing a pioneering role." But she was cautious, saying that while she was hopeful of a compromise on Friday, further negotiations would be needed.

Polish President Lech Kaczynski said: "Poland is ready to accept binding targets as long as they are the European average and specific conditions of various countries are taken into account."

French President Jacques Chirac accepted a binding target but told fellow leaders nuclear power must also play a role in Europe's drive to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

Merkel said nuclear power was not a renewable energy form but could help reduce overall carbon dioxide emissions.

Several EU states are fundamentally opposed to using nuclear power or, like Germany, in the process of phasing it out.

As this year's chair of the Group of Eight leading industrialized nations, Merkel wants the EU to set the agenda on the environment.

The summit outcome will form the basis of the EU's position in international talks to find a replacement to the UN Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012. *Reuters*

Don't discuss polar bears, US scientists told

WASHINGTON—POLAR BEARS, sea ice and global warming are taboo subjects, at least in public, for some US scientists attending meetings abroad, environmental groups and a top federal wildlife official said on Thursday.

Environmental activists called this scientific censorship, which they said was in line with the Bush administration's history of muzzling dissent over global climate change.

But H. Dale Hall, director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, said this policy was a long-standing one, meant to honor international protocols for meetings where the topics of discussion are negotiated in advance.

The matter came to light in e-mails from the Fish and Wildlife Service that were distributed by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Center for Biological Diversity, both environmental groups.

Listed as a "new requirement" for foreign travelers on US government business, the memo says that requests for foreign travel "involving or potentially involving climate change, sea ice, and/or polar bears" require special handling, including notice of who will be the official spokesperson for the trip.

The Fish and Wildlife Service top officials need assurance that the spokesperson, "the one responding to questions on these issues, particularly polar bears" understands the administration's position on these topics.

Two accompanying memos were offered as examples of these kinds of assurance. Both included the line that the traveler "understands the administration's position on climate change, polar bears, and sea ice and will not be speaking on or responding to these issues."

Polar bears are a hot topic for the Bush administration, which decided in December to consider whether to list the white-furred behemoths as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act, because of scientific reports that the bears' icy habitat is melting due to global warming.

Hall said a decision is expected in January 2008. A "threatened" listing would bar the government from taking any action that jeopardizes the animal's existence, and might spur debate about tougher measures to cut the greenhouse gas emissions that spur global warming.

Hall defended the policy laid out in the memos, saying it was meant to keep scientists from straying from a set agenda at meetings in countries like Russia, Norway and Canada. *Reuters*

Democrats demand Iraq pullout in March 2008

WASHINGTON—US DEMOCRATS unveiled a double-pronged attack on President George W. Bush over Iraq Thursday, demanding the withdrawal of all US combat troops from the unpopular war as early as March 2008.

But the White House swiftly responded, vowing Bush would veto any bill that amounted to a precipitous departure from Iraq, and accused Congress's Democratic leaders of interfering in military strategy for political gain.

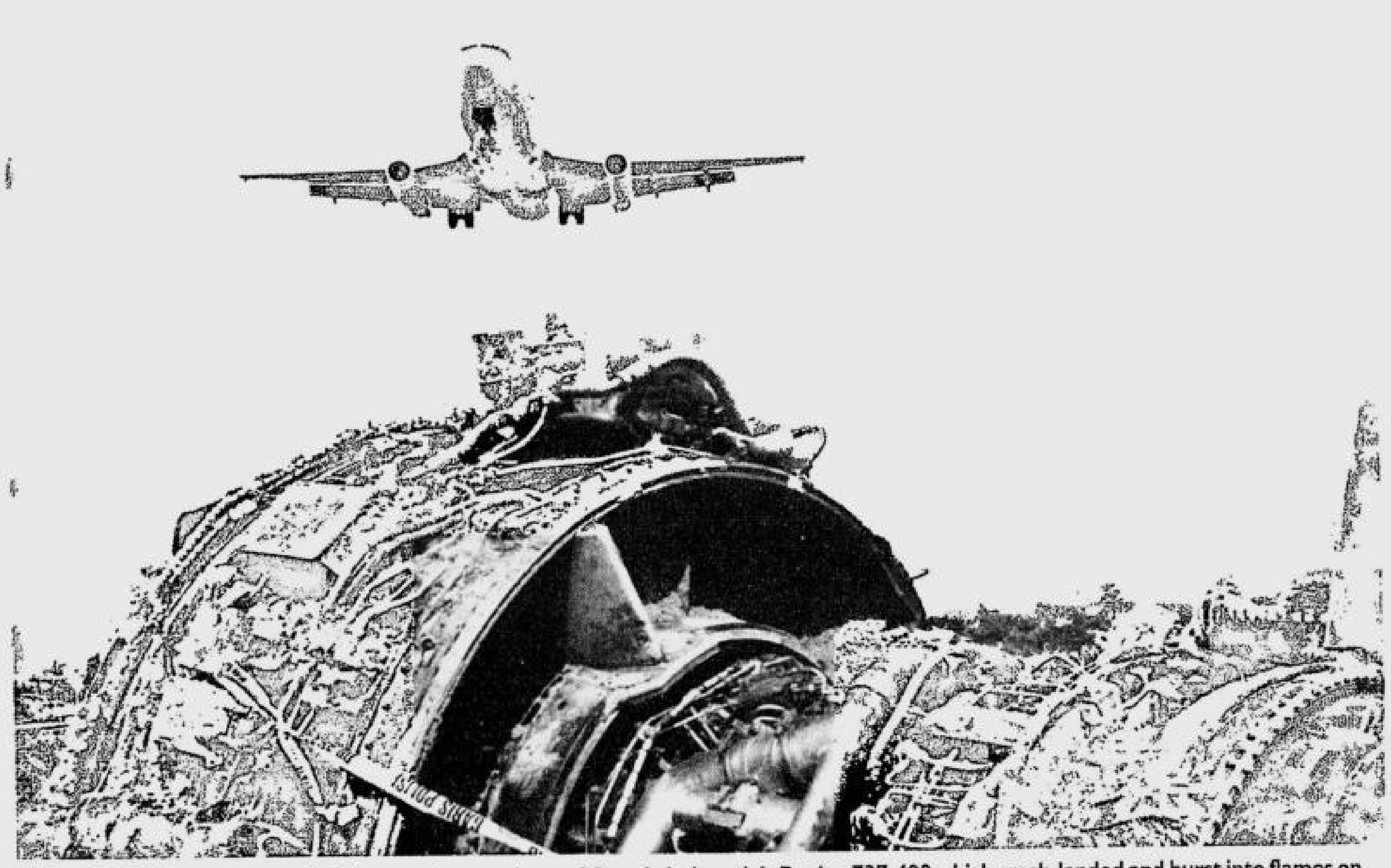
After days fusing internal divisions on Iraq, Democrats in both the Senate and House of Representatives threw down the gauntlet, after Bush left Washington on a trip to Latin America.

Senate Democrats pushed for debate next week on a joint resolution requiring Bush to ditch his current plan to surge 21,500 troops into Iraq with a goal of getting all combat soldiers out by March 31, 2008.

But Republicans resisted, saying they needed more time to study the plan, similar to recommendations of the independent Iraq Study Group last year, which has already been rejected by Bush.

In the House, Democrats took the wraps off an attempt to withdraw combat troops by September 2008 at the latest, saying the United States needed to refocus on where the "war on terror" started, in Afghanistan.

The new Democratic offensive was the latest attempt by the party, which rode public anger over the conflict to capture Congress last year, to curtail Bush's strategy in a war which has killed 3,191 US troops. *AFP*



AN INDONESIAN passenger jet flies over the wreckage of Garuda Indonesia's Boeing 737-400 which crash-landed and burst into flames on Wednesday, at Adisucipto airport in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, March 8. AP

Sudden downdraft cited in Indonesia jet inferno

YOGYAKARTA, INDONESIA—AN Indonesian jetliner slammed into the runway after struggling with a sudden downdraft, snapping its front wheels and then bursting into flames in a rice field at the end of the runway, according to an account by the pilot and investigators.

Twenty-one people were killed Wednesday in the country's fourth major airline accident since 2005, but the rest of the 140 people on board survived, jumping through emergency exits as flames and smoke filled the cabin.

The pilot of the Garuda Airlines Boeing 737-400 "said he felt a very powerful downdraft (just) before landing," the president of the Garuda pilot's association, Capt. Stephanus Geraldus, said.

Geraldus, who spoke to the pilot after the accident, said severe downdrafts, typically caused by differences in air temperature or pressure, have been blamed in other accidents involving commercial jetliners.

Geraldus said that a pilot feels the plane is being "dragged" to earth, but there are standard ways to restore control of the craft.

He said data from the plane's flight recorders was needed before drawing any conclusions on the cause of the crash.

The dead included at least four Australians, and that country is helping with the probe.

Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty said in Australia Friday that Indonesian investigators had provided him with a similar account by the pilot, but Keelty too stressed that it was very early in the investigation.

Investigators have already said the front wheels of the plane snapped off on landing and that fuel from a punctured tank in the right wing fed the flames, which reached up to 600 degrees Celsius (1,112 Fahrenheit).

The crash put the spotlight back on Indonesia's patchy aviation safety record.

Experts say poor maintenance, rule-bending and a shortage of trained professionals in the country's booming aviation industry may be behind the disasters.

"It is shameful to have so many accidents," Vice President Yusuf Kalla said Friday. *AP*

Threats, conciliatory gestures on Women's Day

AN ANDEAN woman attends a rally to mark the International Women's Day in Cuzco, Peru, March 8. AP

PARIS—SOME WOMEN ENdured the threat of court charges, some governments made conciliatory gestures Thursday as International Women's Day was marked around the world.

A court in Turkey charged 92 women over a women's day demonstration on Monday when they shouted slogans in favor of jailed Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Thirty-one of the protestors were remanded in custody in Cizre, Sirnak province pending trial while the rest were released, an official said.

Amid mounting calls for greater efforts to ease abuse and discrimination against women, some governments sought to ease criticism of their action however.

Algeria's President Abdelziza Bouteflika slashed the sentences of all women prisoners in the country by 12 months, an official announced.

Iran released 22 women's rights activists who had been detained after a protest last Saturday, one of their lawyers told AFP. Three activists remained in custody however.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon highlighted how fighting physical abuse of women figures high on his agenda.

"Violence against women and girls makes its hideous imprint on every continent, country and culture," Ban said in a speech at UN headquarters. "It is a threat to all women, and should be unacceptable to all humankind." In Democratic Republic of Congo, thousands of women filled a stadium in Goma, demanding an end to sexual violence.

"What is terrible is the impunity. Sometimes rapists are arrested, but they are often released or receive light sentences," said Claudine Tsongo of a women lawyer's organization in Goma, pointing out that there were about 10,000 rapes in the province each year.

South Africa launched a new national plan aimed at combating one of the world's highest rates of domestic violence.

"The levels of physical, emotional and sexual abuse experienced by our women and children still remains unacceptably high and is growing," Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka said at the launch of the campaign.

"A home is a dangerous place for most women. A bed is a dangerous place for women, the altar on which they are sacrificed," she added.

For the international day, the World Health Organization released a report saying one girl in five is a victim of sexual violence before the age of 15. *AFP*

Diary shows Hirohito didn't want war in China

TOKYO—EMPEROR HIROHITO, in whose name Japanese soldiers fought in World War II, was reluctant to start a war with China in 1937 and had believed in stopping it earlier, media reported on Friday, citing a diary by his former chamberlain.

The revelation comes after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe angered Asian neighbors with controversial remarks about Japan's wartime actions, and as Tokyo and Beijing prepare for an expected April visit to Japan by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao.

According to the diary by Kuraji Ogura, the late Hirohito also said Japan had underestimated China's military strength, adding that experts in the Imperial Army had failed to correctly forecast the war in China.

"Japan underestimated China. It is most wise to end the war quickly and seek to build up our national strength for the next ten years," the diary quotes Hirohito as saying in January 1941, according to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

Japan and China entered full-scale war following the Marco Polo Bridge incident in 1937.

In December 1942, a year after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Hirohito is quoted as saying that the timing for ending a war is important and that war should be fought to the best of one's ability.

"One you start (a war), it cannot easily be stopped in the middle ... What's important is when to end the war," the diary quotes him as saying.

"One should be cautious in starting a war, but once begun, it should be carried out thoroughly." Hirohito's remarks may provide insight into the monarch's war responsibility, which academics say has never been fully pursued in Japan largely due to a decision by US Occupation authorities to keep him on the throne and turn the emperor into a symbol of a newly democratic Japan.

Last July, a memo by another courtier said that Hirohito had stopped visiting a Tokyo shrine for Japan's war dead because he was displeased by the shrine's decision to honor wartime leaders convicted as war criminals. *Reuters*

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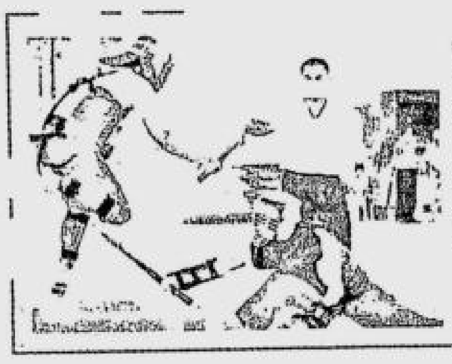
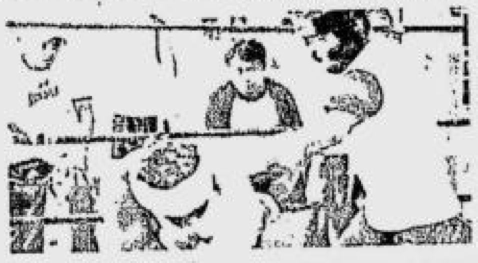
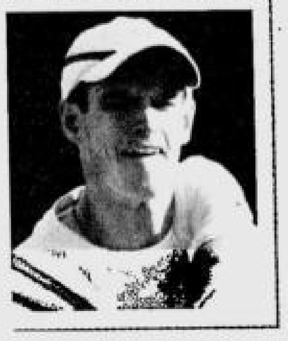


WHAT'S INSIDE
Baguio bets overtake Pangasinan /A24



Federer's record awes Murray /A26



Peñalosa asks for prayers /A25 **Spurs thump Kings** /A26

Amazing Alcano seeks 3rd title

Manila to host maiden world 10-ball tourney

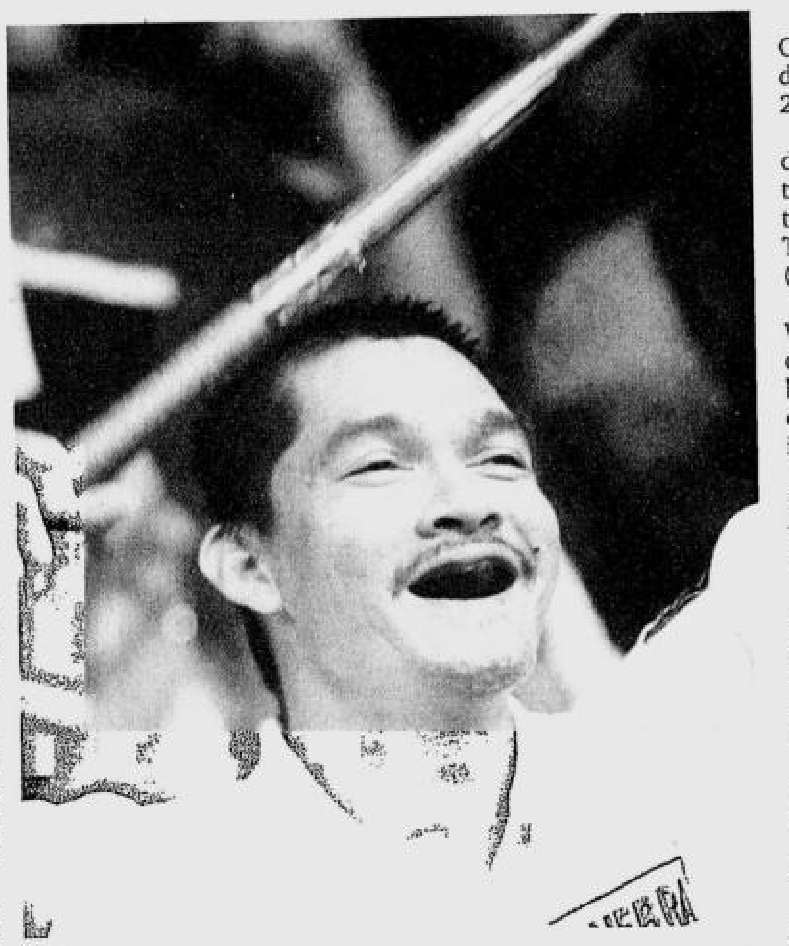
HE PROUDLY WEARS THE world 9-ball and 8-ball crowns, but Ronnie Alcano feels he has a good chance at grabbing the world 10-ball title as well.

All he needs to do is get into tip-top shape when the country hosts the inaugural of the World 10-Ball Championships next year.

The Philippines, living up to its reputation as the hotbed of billiards, earned the right to host the World 10-Ball in 2008 through the initiative of Yen Makabenta, chair of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines.

Makabenta, also the president of Raya Sports which organized the 2006 World Pool Championship in Manila, managed to get the sanction of the World Pool Billiard Association headed by Ian Anderson when they met in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, last Monday.

At the same time, Makabenta was able to gain WPA approval for the Philippine 10-Ball Open this September, a month before the country's second hosting of the WPC 9-Ball.



RONNIE Alcano, the only Filipino to hold the world 9-ball and 8-ball championships at the same time, is also eyeing the 10-ball title.

"The WPA sanctioned the Philippine 10-ball Open," Makabenta told the the INQUIRER yesterday. "The inauguration of World 10-ball is in 2008. We only have to file papers formally."

While in Fujairah, Makabenta also provided details of the Filipinos' successful campaign in the World 8-Ball, where Alcano bested compatriot and stablemate Dennis Orcollo, 11-8, Thursday night for the title and the $25,000 (P1.2 million) champion's purse.

"This early, I'll begin preparing for the World 10-Ball in 2008," the 34-year-old Alcano said in Filipino. "In my opinion, this (10-ball) is one of the most difficult events because the balls are set up in a triangle, unlike in the 9-ball."

With his recent victory, Alcano duplicated the feat of Taiwanese sensation Wu Chia-ching who clinched the world 9-ball and 8-ball titles in succession in 2005 and early 2006.

Largely unknown, Alcano rose to prominence when he beat Ralf Souquet of Germany in the finals of the World Pool 9-Ball Championship held in Manila last November.

Alcano arrives tomorrow

Alcano, the AZBilliards Rookie of the Year, will arrive tomorrow. Orcollo, who pocketed $12,500 (P600,000), planed in last night.

BSCP president Ernie Fajardo also lauded the acceptance of 10-ball as a legitimate event.

"The game (10-ball) requires more skill and provides more thrill with the addition of one ball."

As far as Alcano is concerned, Filipino cue masters have a bigger chance to win the World 9-Ball crown if the organizing committee of the WPC will allow players to use the "soft break."

Filipinos have edge

"That's for sure, the Filipinos have the edge with the soft break," said Alcano.

"*Bawal sa Japan at Korea ang* soft-break (The soft break is not allowed in Japan and Korea)," he said. "*Pinayagan nila ang* soft break sa Taiwan, *pero dahil ako lang ang may* style *na ito, di ko na rin ginamit* (They do allow it in Taiwan, but because I was the only one who preferred the soft break I opted not to use it." ***Marlon Bernardino, Contributor.***

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Frankie, 3 other Pinoys make cut

SINGAPORE—INDIAN ACE Jyoti Randhawa rode the momentum of a solid front nine to take a one-stroke lead after the second round of the Singapore Masters at the Laguna National Golf Club on Friday.

The Filipinos also made their mark with Angelo Que, Frankie Miñoza, Tony Lascuña and Gerald Rosales advancing to the money rounds.

Que slipped to a 73, but remained at the helm of the Filipinos' charge with a 139 total, six shots off Randhawa's 133 and good for a share of 11th to 23rd places.

Miñoza shot a 71 and stood at 140, one up on Lascuña, who fired a 72, and Rosales, who tallied a 69, for 141s.

The 34-year-old Randhawa from New Delhi shot a four-under 68 on the more demanding Masters Course to finish on 11-under-par at the halfway point, just ahead of Scotland's Barry Hume, who overcame a late double-bogey to stand alone in second place.

Malaysia's Iain Steel and Briton Gary Lockerbie are a shot further back in a tie for third place after rounds of 65 and 67, respectively, one stroke ahead of joint overnight leader Liang Wenchong of China and Ireland's Peter Lawrie.

The $1.1 million European and Asian Tour event is split over two layouts for the first two rounds with the final 36 holes played on the traditional venue, the Masters Course.

Randhawa began the day in a tie for third place after an opening seven-under 65 on the easier Classic Course on Thursday.

The cut was made at two-under par, depriving the tournament of the three European Ryder Cup players in Singapore this week—Britons Darren Clarke, David Howell and Lee Westwood.

Clarke finished three-over for the tournament, Howell was even par and Westwood narrowly missed out on one-under par. *Reuters*

Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA), through its Regional Bid and Awards Committee (RBAC) invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	Construction of MLGC Cum Trading Post
Location	Calubian, Leyte
Approved Budget for the contract (ABC)	P4,960,639.49

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have a key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The RBAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The RBAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The schedule of RBAC activities are as follows:

RBAC Activities	Schedule
1 Receipt from prospective bidders of Letter of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	March 12-16, 2007 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	March 12-16, 2007 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	March 23, 2007, 5:00 PM
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 26-27, 2007 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 26-30, 2007 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
6. Pre-bid Conference	April 11, 2007, 9:00 AM
7. Receipt and Opening of bids	April 23, 2007, 9:00 AM

The RBAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at NFA Regional Office VIII Pawing Palo, Leyte, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P500.00 to the National Food Authority Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the RBAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the RBAC at the same address.

The RBAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the RBAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 to the National Food Authority Cashier.

NFA reserves the right to accept or to reject any bids thereof, waive any informalities found therein or to accept such bids or to award to any contractor whose bid is considered most advantageous to the NFA and/or the government.

The NFA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ANTONIO J. ADORABLE
Assistant Regional Manager/
RBAC Chairperson

(PDI - March 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Provincial Capitol Malaybalay City
Tel. # 088-221-4820 & Telefax # 088-221-2537
E-mail Add: buk_provl_bac@yahoo.com.ph
OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR
Bids and Awards Committee

[illegible]

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID (RE-BID)

The PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BUKIDNON through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility to bid and re-bid for the hereunder projects:

NAME OF THE PROJECT	Project I – DRUGS AND MEDICINES Project II - MEDICAL, LABORATORY SUPPLIES AND REAGENTS
LOCATION	Provincial General Services Office
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	For the use of Seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and Twenty-Two (22) Health Stations for the FIRST semester of CY 2007.
Approved Budget for the contract	Project I - P11,593,569.19 Project II - P216,767.44
DELIVERY PERIOD	15 working days upon receipt of Notice to Proceed
PLACE OF DELIVERY	Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 19, 2007
2. Pre-bid conference	March 14, 2007
3. Application for Eligibility	March 19, 2007
4. Opening of Bids Deadline for the submission of Bid documents	March 28, 2007 March 28, 2007 not later than 9:00 am
5. Notice of Award	April 04, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to Prospective Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,000.00 for Drugs and Medicines and P300.00 for Medical, Laboratory, Supplies and Reagents, at the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

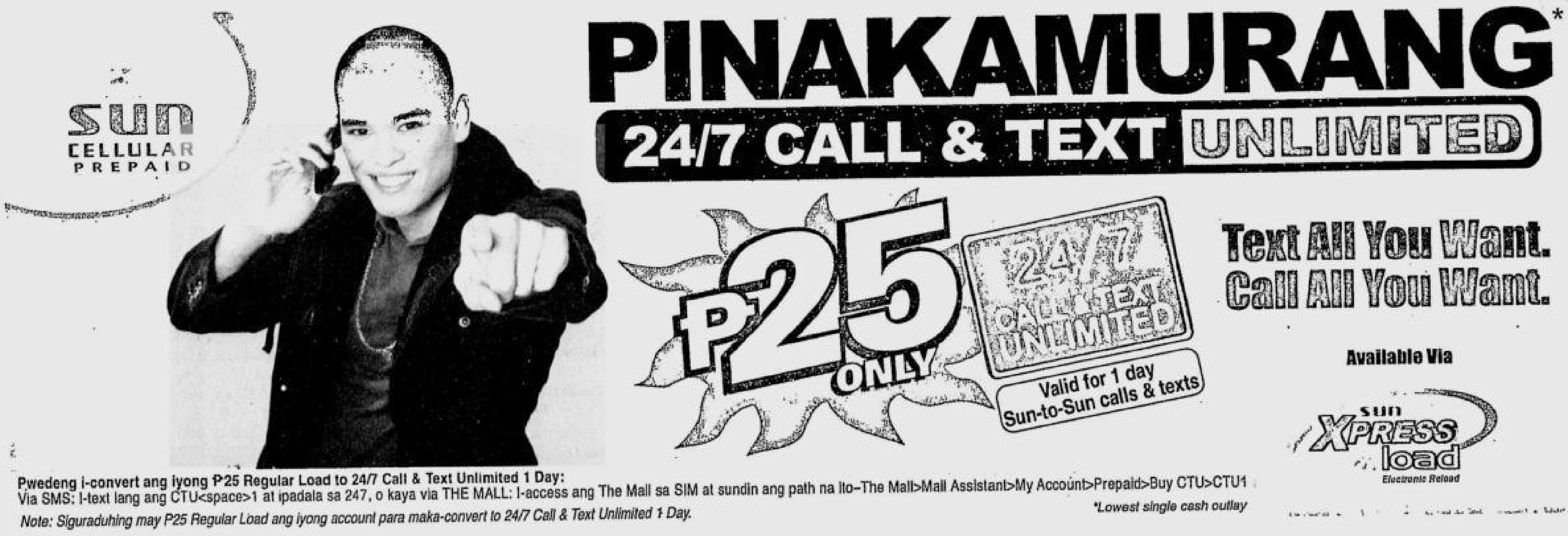
Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the BAC office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security equal to 1% for Cash, Certified check, Cashier's check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable letter of credit; 1.5% for Bank guarantee, 2.5% for Surety bond of the Approved Budget for the Contract as advertised. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

The Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES
Prov'l. Admin/BAC Chairman

(PDI—March 10 & 17, 2007)



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*Lowest single cash outlay
Note: Siguraduhing may P25 Regular Load ang iyong account para maka-convert to 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited 1 Day.

Pine City bets overtake Pangasinan

Capture 20 gold medals in arnis

By June Navarro

VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR—BAGUIO CITY CHOPPED HARD WITH BIG WINS IN ARNIS yesterday to snatch the overall lead from Pangasinan going into the final two days of the 2nd Philippine Olympic Festival here.

MEDAL TALLY	G	S	B
Baguio City	32	29	18
Pangasinan	19	13	12
Ilocos Norte	13	8	9
Bulacan	12	7	7
Cagayan	8	14	19
Ilocos Sur	7	8	14
La Union	7	7	6
Nueva Ecija	5	2	5
Angeles	1	3	6
Benguet	0	1	2
Ifugao	0	0	2
Tarlac	0	1	0
Nueva Vizcaya	0	0	1
Olongapo City	0	0	1

Ana Melissa De Leon pocketed six gold medals while her younger brother, Christopher De Leon, scored three more victories as Baguio City harvested 20 of the 25 gold medals staked in arnis.

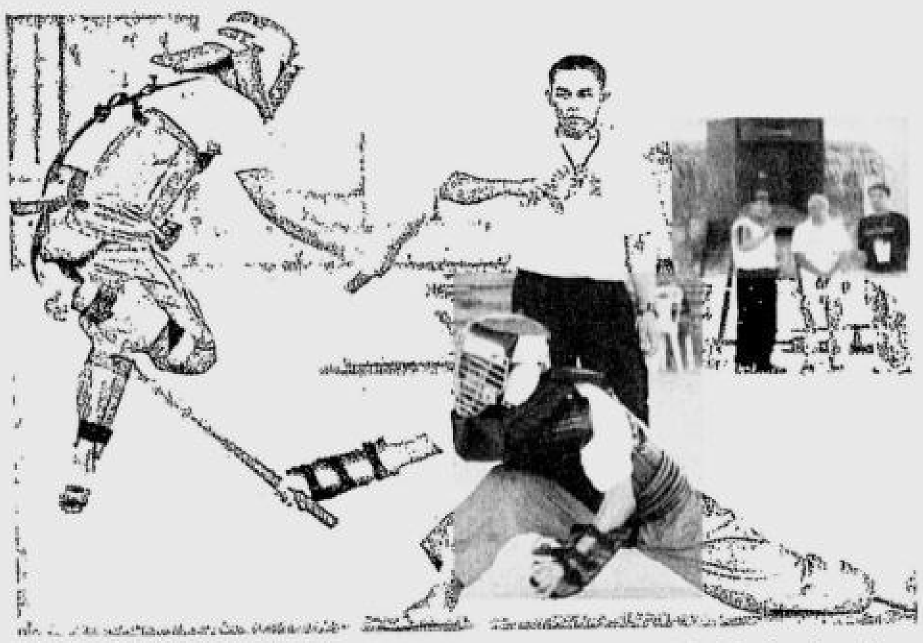
De Leon reigned supreme in the girls' individual single weapon, individual double weapon, half lightweight in full-contact event, espada y daga, team single weapon and team double weapon to become the most bemedaled athlete in the games, so far.

"Aside from studying, I spent most of my time training," said De Leon, a charming 15-year-old junior from the Baguio City National High School. "Those sacrifices obviously paid off."

De Leon thus eclipsed the achievements of gymnast Marie Rose Mendoza and long-distance runner Lany Cardona, both quadruple gold medalists.

De Leon's brother, Christopher, nailed victories in the boys' pinweight full-contact event, individual single weapon and individual double weapon competitions that boosted Baguio's tally to 32 gold, 29 silver and 18 bronze medals on Day 4 of the week-long event.

Both siblings were accompanied by their father and coach, retired police colonel Manuel de Leon.


CAGAYAN'S Michael Jade Ramos (left) evades a parry by Baguio's Aries Lumiwes in the finals of the junior men's featherweight class in arnis. Ramos won the gold. RYAN LIM

Baguio's Kristian Lango Sakiwat and Reynaldo Estabilo also had three gold medals each with victories in the men's individual single weapon (sakiwat), men's individual double weapon (estabilo), team single weapon and team double weapon.

Cagayan took the other five arnis gold medals.

Angelica Montegrico (women's bantamweight), Kevin Columna and Kenneth Columna (boys team single and double weapon), Michael Jade Ramos (men's featherweight) and Christian Cabantac (men's extra lightweight) won gold medals for Cagayan.

Erstwhile overall leader Pangasinan, which got a lone gold courtesy of Prince Mark Aquino in the under-14 division yesterday, dropped to second with a 19-13-12 medal haul.

Other gold medalists from Baguio were Jun Ray Emilio (featherweight division), Benny Oralio Jr. (extra lightweight division), Ayatollah Gadaoni (lightweight), Michael Anayasan (bantamweight), Claire Donga-as (women's featherweight) and Mara Olivia Damatac (women's extra lightweight).

In chess, Jake Dela Cruz and Rose Marie Parina dominated the Open section of their respective classes to capture Nueva Ecija (5-2-5) two gold medals for the day.

Bulacan's Karl Victor Ochoa (20-under), Ilocos Sur's Generose Razo (14-under), Ilocos Norte's Christine Mariano (20-under) and Pangasinan's Prince Mark Aquino (14-under) completed the cast of medal winners in chess.

FEU, UST lady booters renew Ang Liga rivalry

MATCH TODAY (*UST Ground*)
4:30 p.m.—FEU vs Santo Tomas

THE MUCH-AWAITED SHOWDOWN between UAAP arch rivals Far Eastern and Santo Tomas in the PFF-Ang Liga Pilipina football championship sizzle today at the UST football grounds.

The 4:30 p.m. tussle will be a virtual grudge match after the Lady Tamaraws dethroned the Tigresses, 2-1, in their UAAP championship match three weeks ago.

The charges of FEU coach Malou Rubio, who sport a 6-1 win-loss card, are out to prove that their victory over UST was no fluke as they also aim to wrest second place from their foes (7-1) in the event sponsored by Mizuno.

FEU will be leaning on strikers Ruchelle Latap, Renalyn Elento and Glaiza Artus while UST is expected to go to crack forwards Aprilyn Reyes and Cristina Du.

The Tigresses are coming off a 4-2 loss to the Candidates last weekend at the same venue.

The Candidates thus avenged their 1-2 loss in the first round while dealing their rivals their first defeat.

FEU, meanwhile, blanked Nomads, 8-0, for its sixth win.

The Candidates, made up of members of the national pool, booked their ninth win in 10 matches in the event organized by the Philippine National Women's Football Association.

Fisherman's daughter, shoeless wonder

By June Navarro

VIGAN, ILOCOS SUR—THE LAST time 16-year-old Lany Cardona wore a pair of running shoes on the track, she lost.

"It ripped open in the middle of the race," Cardona said in Filipino of the pair whose brand she could not remember.

The gutsy senior student from the Pilart National High School—her shoes "smiling"—wound up fourth in the 800-meter run of the Ilocos Region Athletic Association meet held in Lingayen, Pangasinan, last year.

Naturally, Cardona felt greatly betrayed. Since then, she has refused to put on running shoes on the track.

"I've always ended up with a medal in any event since then," said the daughter of a poor fisherman from Bolinao, Pangasinan.

In fact, Cardona snared gold medals in the 3,000m and 1,500m while snatching a silver in the 800m during this year's IRAA held in San Carlos town.

The barefoot wonder netted four gold medals this week, boosting Team Pangasinan's stock in winning the overall crown in the ongoing Philippine Olympic Festival here.

She bested the field in the girls' 10,000m, 5,000m, 3,000m and 1,500m runs and checked in second in the 800m. That enabled her to share the limelight with gymnast Marie Rose Mendoza as the most bemedalled athletes of the games.

With those brilliant feats, Cardona automatically advanced to the national championships in Manila.

"I didn't really expect to win most of my events," she said meekly.

Her secret?

"It was probably hard training," said Cardona, who does shoeless jogs for several kilometers daily after class.

The youngest in a brood of five, Cardona wants to enroll in criminology after high school while continuing her promising sojourn on the track.

Meanwhile, she's not too certain whether to stay barefoot or put on a pair of running shoes next time out.

Either way, Cardona should be on the list when sports leaders determine who will train with the RP team for the 2012 London Olympics.

LANY Cardona (right) overcomes the hot sandy track of Quirino Stadium and her rivals to nail the 3,000-meter gold medal. RYAN LIM

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
FUEGO HOTELS AND PROPERTIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION Unit 1504 Corporate Center Bldg., 139 Valero St., Salcedo Vill., Makati City	Alfredo Perez Roca	Chief Operations Officer
HYDER CONSULTING PHILIPPINES, INC. 41/F Philam Life Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Christopher John Parkinson	Landscape Department Manager
THE HERITAGE HOTEL MANILA (GRAND PLAZA HOTEL CORP.) 10/F The Heritage Hotel Manila, Roxas Blvd. cor. EDSA Extension, Pasay City	Gee Meng Goh	Executive Chef
GLOBALSKY COMMUNICATION CENTER, INC. U-802-803 Raffles Corp. Center, F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., San Antonio, Pasig City	Anthony James Stinson	Assistant Manager
CERATONE PHILIPPINES, INC. Suite 131 G/F, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati City	Masato Yoshida	Department Head
GBS SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT Rm. 401 DHI Bldg., Lapu-Lapu cor. Victoria Sts., Magallanes Village, Makati City	Rhys Meredydd Owen	Editorial Project Manager
NK INTERNATIONAL CO. LTD. U-908 Orient Square Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Center, San Antonio, Pasig City	Hyoungseok Kim	Finance Manager
DONKEY DOO TRADERS LTD. CO. U-1202 Sogo Plaza, 850 Ylaya St., Binondo, Manila	Rongxiong Wu	Consultant
R.P. DE GUZMAN BOOKKEEPING & CONSULTANCY SERVICES Penthouse Emmanuel, 115 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Paul Stuart Carney	Consultant
MINSEO CORP. UG2 Makati Palace Condominium, P. Burgos St., Makati City	Daesoo Choi	General Manager
BUDGET N TIPID HOUSEWARE CORPORATION Stall 33-38 Pedro Gil, Malate, Manila	Yinyin Huang	Purchasing Manager
BUDGET N TIPID HOUSEWARE CORPORATION Stall 33-38 Pedro Gil, Malate, Manila	Wenxiong Zheng	Operations Manager
MANILA NEW LIFE CHURCH, INC. 3/F Marvin Plaza Bldg., Pasong Tamo St., Makati City	Young Tae Kim	Sunday School Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI - March 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT - ILOCOS
City of San Fernando, La Union
Tel. No.: (072) 2425315 • 2425316 Fax No.: (072) 2424774

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Health - Center for Health Development for Ilocos, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of Insecticides to be used in the Campaign against Dengue and Malaria in the Ilocos Region
Location : Regionwide
Approved Budget for the contract : Php2,399.405.00

Item	Description	Quantity
1. D-Tetramethrin-Cyphenothrin	Liquid, for fogging, liter	250
2. Etofenprox WP	Sachet, for Malaria spraying, 50 gram	2,500
3. Alphacypermethrin WP	Sachet, for Malaria spraying 30 gram	1,000
4. Alphacypermethrin 1.5 SC	Liquid, for bed net treatment, liter	50

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Bid evaluation and post-qualification of the lowest calculated and responsive bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s); Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	April 2 - 13, 2007
2. Pre-bid Conference	April 2, 2007
3. Opening of Bids and Bid Evaluation	April 16, 2007
4. Post Qualification	April 19 - 20, 2007
5. Notice of Award	April 24, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (PhP1,000.00) to the CHD I Cashier.

The Center for Health Development for Ilocos assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

For further inquiries please call Mr. Gustavon S. Onias, Head BAC Secretariat at telephone Nos. 242-5315, 888-3395.

Approved:
(Sgd.) JIMUEL S. CARDENAS, MD., MHA.,
BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 10 & 17, 2007)

SPORTSWATCH

La Salle-Dasma clinches volley title

DE LA SALLE-DASMARIÑAS WEATHERED REPEATED COMEBACKS BY ST. Francis of Assisi to clinch the men's title in the 14th Petron-NCRAA volleyball championship at the PUP Gym in Sta. Mesa, Manila. The Patriots leaned on two decisive scoring blitz in the fourth and fifth sets to complete a 23-25, 25-12, 21-25, 25-13, 15-9 victory over the Doves in Game 2 of their best-of-three finals showdown. The Cavite-based Patriots claimed their third crown under coach Fidel Rojales, capping their stint with eight straight victories.

Milo Checkmate clinics open Monday

EARLY-SUMMER CHESS CLINICS ORGANIZED BY CHECKMATE PHILS. AND sponsored by Milo will be launched staring Monday at the upper second floor of St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City and at McDonald's-Binondo in Manila. The chess classes at St. Francis, behind SM Megamall, will be held from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. while the clinic at McDonald's-Binondo will be from 8 a.m.-12 noon. The clinic consists of seven sessions. Open to young chessers five years and older. Interested parties are advised to bring notebooks, pens, a chess set and must register at least before the clinic starts. For inquiries, call the Metropolitan Chess Club at 826-8560, 0916-852-1069 or 0916-6608-712.

'King of the Ring' slated at Roligon

PREPARATIONS ARE UNDER WAY FOR THE HOLDING OF THE KING OF THE Ring 5-Cock Derby slated April 12, 14, 16 and 18 at Roligon Mega Cockpit. In response to requests from cockers and breeders, host Rolly Ligon pegged the entry at only P6,600. A guaranteed prize of P2 million await the champions. Roligon also presents another easy-to-win format called "Smalltime Battle of Champions" 3-cock derby, with P500,000 guaranteed prize at stake, on March 17. During the no-entry-fee one-cock "ulutan" elimination rounds on March 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, 30 and 31 and April 1, the first 30 winners will get P1,000 each, 31st to 60th winners, P800 each and and 61st to last winner, P600 each.

51 fights in Las Piñas derby today

FIFTY-ONE ENCOUNTERS SPICE UP TODAY'S SPECIAL 3-COCK DERBY starting at 7 p.m. at Las Piñas Coliseum. Erning Soriano of Cavite is hosting today's event which stakes a cash prize of P350,000 for an entry fee of P5,500. Cockers from Cavite, Pasay, Las Piñas, Parañaque and Muntinlupa square it off for the top purses. Among the biggest entries are Gerry Ramos, Benjie Lim, Tony Lasala, Tony Antonio, R. Tingson, Angel Tenedero, Kisapmata group, Rudy Sayaman, Mayor Nene Aguilar, Cito Zamesa and Paeng Arciaga. Meanwhile, LPC's Summer Bigtime 5-Cock Derby kicks off on March 17 with Ricky Valencia as host.

Five-cocker kicks off at Makati Coliseum

THE FIFTH LEG OF THE PINOY COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPpines (PCAP) 5-cock derby series, featuring some 70 quality fights, takes center stage at Makati Coliseum today with B- Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador as main backers. Promoters Lito Salud, Lito Orillaza and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. expect an intense battle today as the leading participants try to pile up points for the 2007 PCAP Cocker of the Year race. Anthony Lim and Honey Yu of Quezon province ruled the PCAP's fourth leg on Feb. 26 after their Lucban 531 bet posted a 5-0 (win-loss) slate. Richard Bates and Col. Necy Katigbak (Victoria Peak) finished second.

ASIAN CITIES CHESS

Dimakiling, So rule as Tagaytay-RP clinches 2nd

Final standings:

30 points—Pavlodar (Kazakhstan); 26—**Tagaytay-RP**; 25—Saipa (Iran); 23—Rah Ahan (Iran); 21.5—Shanghai (China), Tidewater (Iran); 17.5—Damascus (Syria), Tehran (Iran); 16.5—Dubai (UAE); 16—Sulimania (Iraq); 15.5—Calicut (India), Lahora (Pakistan); 15—Amman (Jordan), Sharjah (UAE), Aleppo (Syria), Colombo (Sri Lanka); 12—Erbil (Iraq); 6.5—Jerusalem (Palestine).

TEHRAN, IRAN—NO DUBAI CUP FOR TAGaytay-Philippines this time.

Only a silver trophy that, to most participants here, glitters like gold.

Tagaytay-RP finished as strongly as it started by demolishing Amman (Jordan), 4-0, to clinch runner-up honors behind runaway champion Pavlodar (Kazakhstan) in the 15th Asian Cities Chess Team Championship at the Eram Grand Hotel here Thursday.

Grandmasters Mark Paragua and Rogelio Antonio Jr. and International Masters Wesley So and Oliver Dimakiling won their respective matches in the Filipinos' determined final-round push that enabled them to edge host Saipa (Iran) for second place overall in this 18-team, 12-nation tournament.

The Filipinos—the only team to beat the Kazakhs, 2.5-1.5, in the fourth round—brought home the runner-up prize of US$2,000.

Paragua outclassed Hammoudeh Ismail, Antonio whipped Al Qasem Mohammad, So trounced Sameer Mansour and Dimakiling dumped Mousa Naiem to complete the RP victory.

Overall, the Filipinos finished with a nine-round total of 26 points, four behind two-time champion Kazakhs, who also blanked Calicut (India), 4-0, in the final day of action.

"I'm satisfied with our runner-up finish behind Pavlodar," said Wilfredo Abalos, skipper of the team backed by Tagaytay Mayor Bambol Tolentino.

"The team could have retained the title it won in 2004 but Pavlodar had better luck in the middle rounds. Still, we have bragging rights for having beaten this year's champion."

Yongest board champ

So, at 13 the youngest player here, and Dimakiling also brought home the individual gold medals on boards three and four, respectively.

So finished with 7.5 points out of a possible nine to edge Petr Kostenko of Pavlodar for the gold while Dimakiling edged Rinat Jumabeav of Pabvlodar and N.A. Hussein of Erbil (Iraq) for the for board honors. Dimakiling also had 7.5 points.

Antonio wound up fourth overall in board two with 6.5 points.

Saipa, which started the day tied with Tagaytay-RP, settled for third place following a 3-1 win over Sulimania (Iraq).

Rah Ahan (Iran) crushed Colombo (Sri Lanka), 3.5-.5, to finish solo fourth with 23 points.

Shanghai (China), 3-1 winner overe Lahore (Pakistan), and Tidewater (Iran), 3.5-.5 victor over Sharjah (UAE), shared fifth with 21.5.

The Nigel Short-coached, all-female Tehran (Iran) finished seventh with 17.5 points.

Filipino bets to Thailand SEAG could swell to 400

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINES COULD BE SENDING AS MANY AS 400 ATHLETES TO THE Thailand Southeast Asian Games this December, with 282 already assured of slots based on their previous SEAG performance.

According to SEAG Task Force co-chair Julian Camacho, the 282 gold and silver medal winners of the 2005 SEAG are automatically qualified. That number, however, is likely to go down.

"Some of these athletes have since retired or are no longer training," said Camacho. "So the number of athletes might even go down and will never go up."

The Task Force, however, did not count the participants in 10 team events, including basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball and football.

Camacho said the Task Force would still deliberate which of the team events will make the cut. In the event that all of them make it to the team, the athletes alone would be about 400.

By comparison, the Philippines sent 700 athletes and officials to the Vietnam SEAG in 2003 and fielded 900 in the SEAG held here two years ago.

"We are looking at that number, more or less 400 athletes," said Camacho. Based on Task Force rules, the delegation is allowed to send half as many officials.

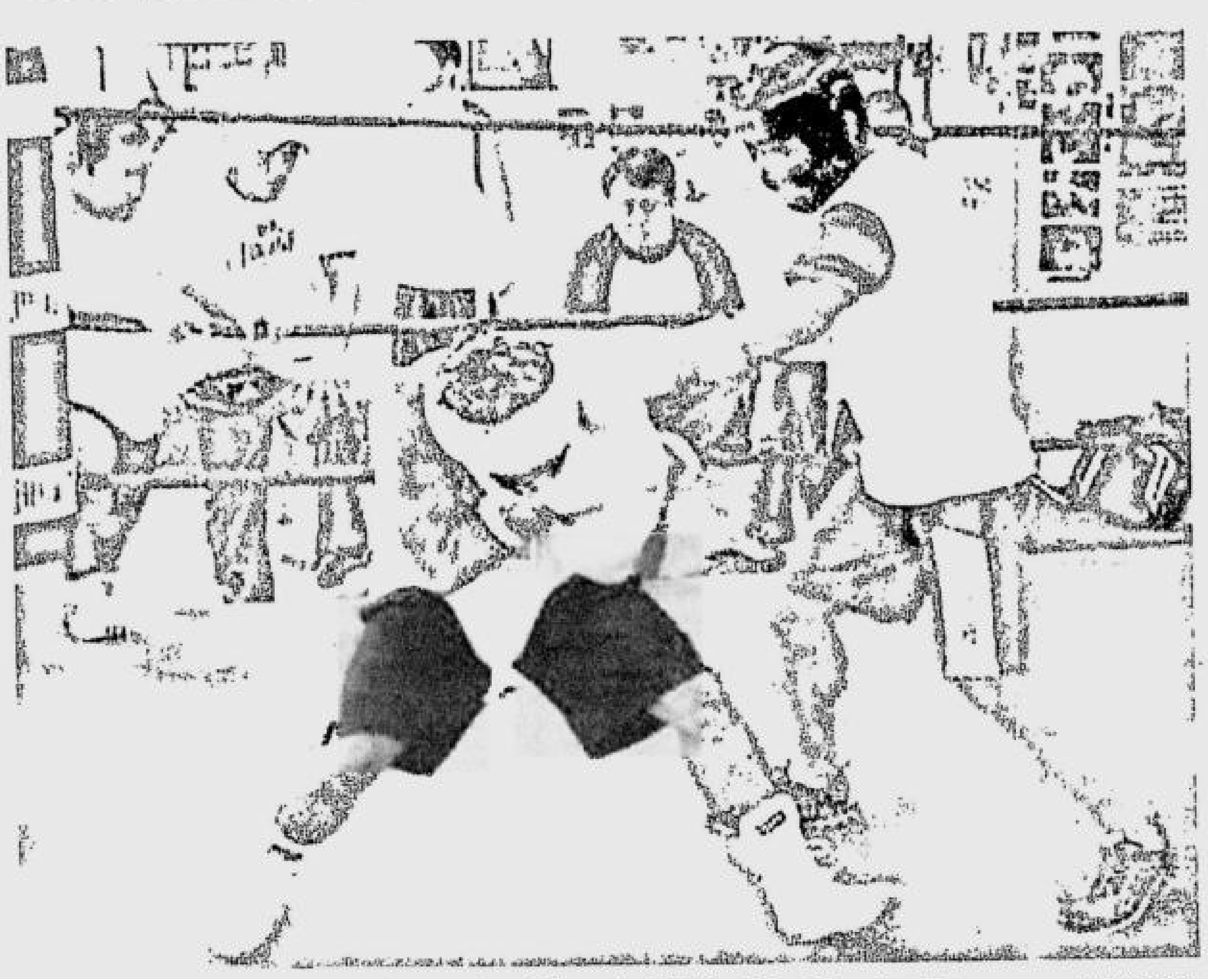
The Philippines ruled the last SEAG with 113 gold medals, redeeming itself from its fourth-place finish in Vietnam where it won 48 golds.

By latest count, Camacho said the Philippines may have lost at least 20 golds after events in wushu, dragonboat and gymnastics were cut down.

In wushu, which is headed by Camacho, the Thailand SEAG organizers only approved 12 events from the 22 rostered during the Philippine edition.

Camacho said he is optimistic more events will be added when the country lobbies for their inclusion during the SEAG Federation Council meeting in April.

Confident Peñalosa asks for prayers



GERRY Peñalosa spars against superbantam Jorge Diaz at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

PHILBOXING.COM

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

GERRY PEÑALOSA IS SUPREMELY CONFIDENT HE can win his second world boxing crown 10 years after he captured the world super flyweight championship in wintry Tokyo.

Peñalosa, 34, gets his final stab at glory when he challenges WBO superbantam champ Daniel Ponce De Leon on March 17 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"Please tell my friends not to worry too much for I have done my part and my responsibilities regarding this fight," Peñalosa told Philboxing.com. "I have trained very hard, harder than I ever did before and I am ready. However, it would help if my fans will keep me in their prayers."

Peñalosa, who dethroned WBC 115-lb champ Horishi Kawashima in February 1997, is training under Freddie Roach's assistant, Justin Fortune, as his trainer-manager is currently in Puerto Rico preparing Oscar De La Hoya for the May 5 super bout with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Yesterday, Peñalosa took on Mexican Jorge Diaz and Nicaraguan Julio Gamboa and looked supremely fit for his biggest fight to date.

Peñalosa breaks camp this weekend and will motor to Las Vegas on Monday for the week-long media and pre-fight promotion that headlines the Marco Antonio Barrera-Juan Manuel Marquez WBC superfeatherweight showdown.

Peñalosa will travel with a small entourage from Los Angeles that includes compatriot Diosdado "Prince" Gabi, who will see action in an eight-rounder on the same card against Giovanni Andrade.

Gabi, also managed and trained by Roach, aims to get another crack at a world title following a heartbreaking loss to IBF flyweight champ Vic Darchinyan.

Centennial, other RP yachts hold sway

By Jasmine W. Payo

PHILIPPINE YACHTS RULED IN THE Oakley Race on Day 2 Thursday of the 15th President's Cup Regatta off Boracay, Aklan.

Centennial, a multititled 46-foot yacht skippered by Ernesto "Judes" Echauz, paced the nine-boat fleet in the IRC Racing Class with a corrected time of two hours, six minutes and 24 seconds.

Echauz, president of the Philippine Sailing Association, said Centennial is on target to successfully defending the overall title after relinquishing its crown to Irresistible in the preceding 5th e-Standard Insurance Manila to Boracay Race.

Centennial finished second to Hong Kong's Jelik in the American Express Race on Day 1.

The overall champion will be crowned after the four-day event that features inshore races in the pristine waters of Boracay and other neighboring islands.

Australia's Quantum Racing, skippered by Ray Roberts, had a corrected time of 2:08:11 to secure second spot.

A DK 46, Quantum Racing remains a race favorite for its impressive regatta record in Australia and Asia.

Jelik, owned and skippered by Hong Kong magnate Frank Pong, slipped to third in 2:09:36.

Selma Star toppled surprise performer Irresistible in the IRC 1 Class to lead with a corrected time of 1:30:15.

Captained by Jesus Avecilla Jr., Selma Star boosted its bid in the 10-yacht class after improving on it runner-up finish on Day 1.

Jonathan Mahony steered new Singapore entry Happy Endings to a close third in 1:32:30 after placing second in the Manila to Boracay Race.

China Rose, skippered by Rainer Blum, edged two other boats with a corrected time of 2:56:42 to dominate the PY Cruising Class for the second straight day.

11-fights in 'Fearless' at Metrowalk tonight

FIERCE FIGHTING EXPLODES TONIGHT WHEN 22 of the country's top martial arts fighters mix it up for top honors in the Fearless Fighting Championship (FFC) billed as "Relentless" at the Metrowalk complex in Ortigas Center in Pasig.

Heading the blockbuster card is the championship fight between Jovan "The Predator" Presbeterio and Joel "The Warrior" Amurao for the featherweight crown in the event presented by Ace Technologies.

Focus will also be on the lightweight match between Mark Sangiao and Freddie Cepeda in what is billed as the RP-US clash. Sangiao is a URCC (Universal Reality Combat Championship) champion and a former SEA Games gold medallist while the Guam-based Cepeda is a knockout artist who is coming off a rousing win in the Trench Wars in Saipan.

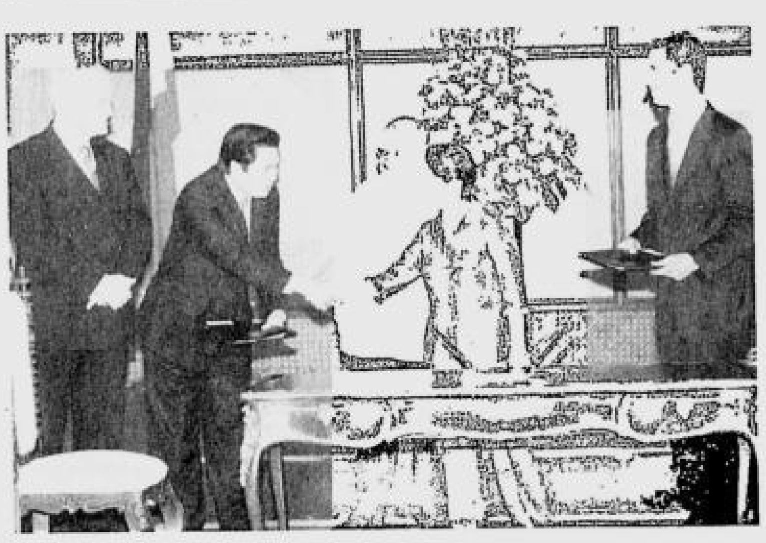
Action starts at 8 p.m. Admission is free, according to Alex Lopez, president and organizer of FFC.

There will be five fights in the qualifying bouts, wherein each fighter needs to score three wins to become a title contender.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Words Of Joy (1), Olive Oyl (11), Take A Strike (3), Mister Cool (2), Queen's Gold (5)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Hammer It Home/Money Man (10), Classic Royale (1), Cheska Run (7), Azukarera De Mama (6), Maximum Impact (11)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Inspiring (4), Wat To Heza (1), Getting Personal (7), Pictaboom (9), Color My World (8)
Race 4—(Tri)—Pride And Joy (1), Love A Trick (2), Our Sailor Moon (5)
Race 5—Leading Man (1), Kalashnikov (14), Kawiliwili (8), Epic Energy (2), Gelay's Charm (5)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Passing Through (6), Erica's Talent (10), Joint Account/Even Now (1), At All Cost (2), Kai Jason (3)
Race 7—(Qrt/Tri)—Tereshkova (1), Sweet Xarah (4), Miss Lilypilly (6), Serious Susie (3)
Race 8—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Karma (6), Harrod's Magic (7), Freedom Charger (5), Hand-Picked (12), Dato's Pride (11)
Race 9—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Scarab (8), Virgin Island (12), St. Germain/Holy King (9), Hok Kee Hok (2), Princess Adarna (4)
Race 10—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Yoshiwara (3), Kaligatan (3), Ginja (1), West N Wild (2), Maginoo's Pride (5)
Race 11—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Desert Breeze (4), Head Turner (10), Capricorn Aida (6), Daog (3), Dream Rose (2)
Race 12—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Bundok Peninsula (1), Unleashed (4), Chicklet (5), Selfmade (7), Bombshell Beauty (2)
Race 13—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Kate Alex (12), Jajie (8), Carlito's Way (4), Playing Cool (6), Power Dance (3), Mary Jane Bomb (13)



PRESIDENTIAL BACKING: President Macapagal Arroyo receives at Malacañang Yen Makabenta, president of Raya Sports and Events and chair of the Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines, during the recent contract signing for the holding of the World Pool Championship in the Philippines this November. With them are (from left) Barry Hearn, chairman of Matchroom Sport of Britain, Tourism Undersecretary Ed Jarque and Harvey Davis, senior director of ESPN-Star Sports. It will be the second time the top international billiards event will be held in the country. Ronnie Alcano won the 2006 event held at the Philippine International Convention Center. With the phenomenal success of the 2006 WPC, Billiards Digest has called the Philippines the "epicenter of international billiards" and the Filipino pool audience at the PICC as the "classiest crowd" in the sport's history.

Big double-header fires off NBC hoopfest today

GAMES TODAY
(*Quezon Convention Center*)
2:00 p.m.—Opening Ceremonies
2:30 p.m.—Pacman-Gensan vs Villa Anita-Quezon
4:30 p.m.—Pagadian vs Tagaytay Spring

LUCENA CITY—AN EXPLOSIVE TWINBILL will kick off the National Basketball Conference's fourth season today at the Quezon Convention Center here.

Expansion teams MP Pacman-Gensan and Villa Anita-Quezon will provide the fireworks shortly after the 2 p.m. opening ceremonies.

The other match at 4:30 p.m. pits last year's runnerup, Tagaytay Spring Cooking Oil of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and league EVP Mayor Bambol Tolentino against Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers, second placers in the 2006 first conference.

"We're excited to host the NBC opening," said Villa Anita team owner Willie Enverga. "Hopefully, our team will be able to make a good start."

The opening of the country's premier regional cagefest supported by Sulpicio Lines, Yahho.com, Molten, Nature's Spring, Nike, Spring Cooking Oil and Viva Prime Channel will be aired on Basketball TV tomorrow.

Boxing icon Pacquiao will not be able to watch his team because he is training for his fight next month, but Padilla, Mayor Tolentino, other team representatives and guests will grace the occasion.

Villa Anita, which topped the first NBC International Invitational Cup here last year, will be bannered by ex-pros Bryan Gahol, Oliver Agapito and Ruel Buenaventura, while Pacquiao's Warriors will lean on Mindanao stars Jeffrey Locsin, Norberto Farochillen, Donald Tadena and Louie Medalla.

The Cooking Oil Masters will have their hands full against the Explorers, who will parade a star-studded cast composed of playing coach Peter Naron, Nelson Asaytono, Bong Marata, Mike Orquillas, Maui Huelar and Melvin Mamaclay.

Defending champion Ozamiz Cotta and eight other teams will play two elimination rounds.

Top motorsports backer returns

PHILIPPINE MOTORSPORTS WILL AGAIN RUN full speed as a top technology brand vowed its continued support to Asian Formula 3 racers.

This year, the Fujitsu Ten Racing Corp. will back up JA Motorsports in its bid to retain the crown in the the Asian Formula 3 Pacific Series.

JA Motorsport, with formidable drivers Moreno Soeprapto of Indonesia and 2006 McLaren Autosport BRDC champion Oliver Turvey, currently leads the team standings with 65 points in the first three rounds staged at the Zhuhai International Circuit in China.

"It's a good start for the team and we hope to keep our lead in the coming races," said Fujitsu Ten president Masahiko Enoki, who was conferred recently with a Plaque of Appreciation by the Golden Wheel Awards Foundation.

Fujitsu Ten Racing, which teamed up with Three Bond, Sparco and San Miguel Corp., has been at the forefront of Philippine motorsports development for the past 10 years.

"The Golden Wheel inspires us to continue supporting Philippine motorsports in our thrust to develop world caliber drivers," said Enoki.

Last year, Fujitsu's support helped JA Motorsports capture the AF3 overall team crown.

Villanueva forges showdown with Torre for La Union title

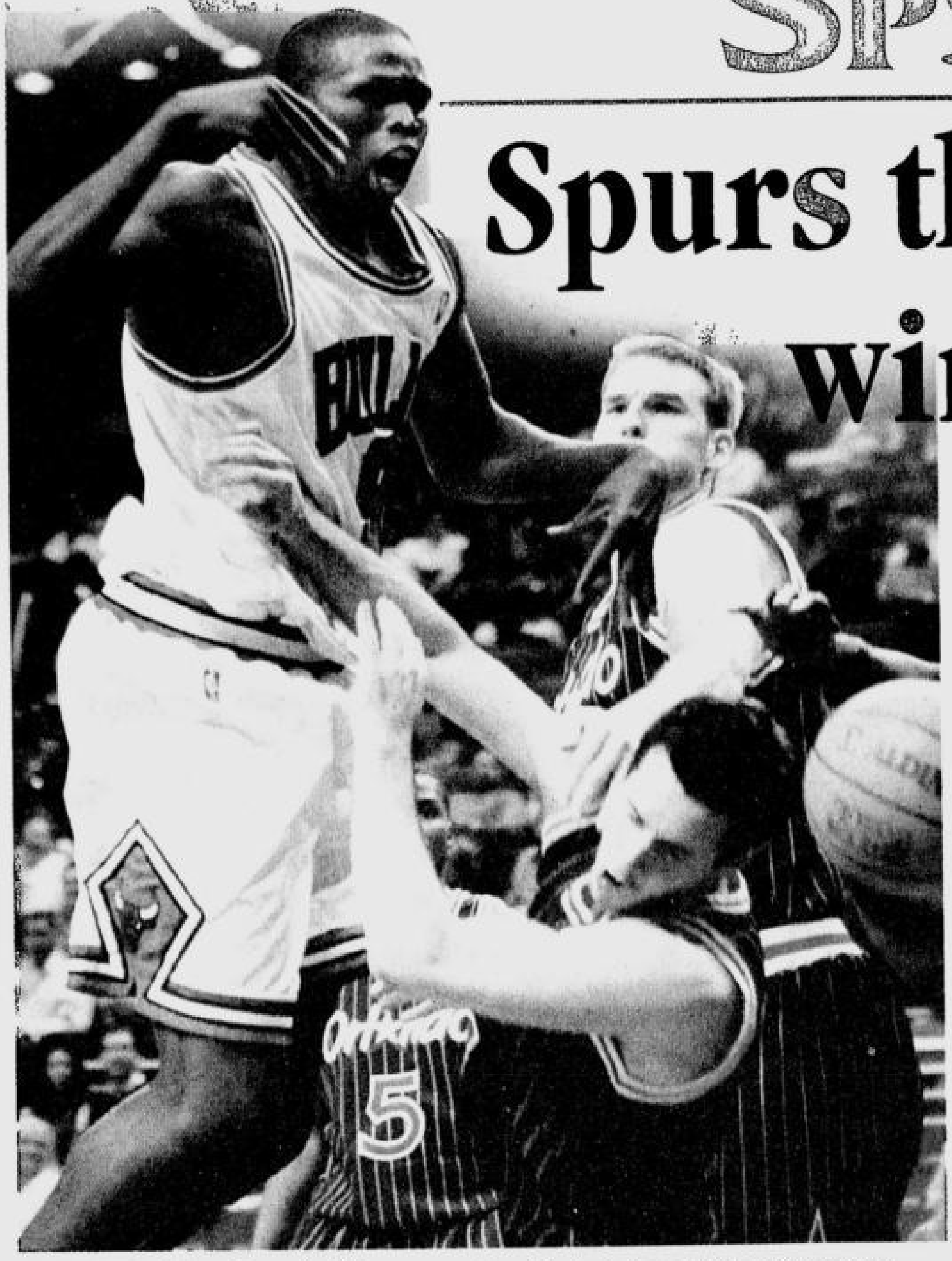
SAN FERNANDO CITY, LA UNION—Rizal Technological University standout Nelson Villanueva blanked La Union's top player Belsar Valencia, 2-0, yesterday to forge a titular showdown with tournament favorite Grandmaster Eugene Torre in the sixth La Union Open Chess Championship at the provincial capitol here.

Torre bested Fide Master Fernie Donguines, 1.5-0.5, in the other semi-final round pairing.

"I expect Villanueva to offer a good fight in the finals," said Torre, Asia's first GM. "He's playing so well."

The champion of the tournament organized by NCFP executive director Samuel Estimo and NCFP regional coordinator Joseph Dumuk will pocket P80,000.

SPORTS


CHICAGO Bulls' Luol Deng (left) loses possession of the ball after colliding with Orlando Magic's J.J. Redick during their NBA game Thursday. The Bulls won, 100-76. AP

Spurs thump Kings, raise winning streak to 11

NBA on TV today
9:30 a.m.—New Jersey vs Houston
(replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

NEW YORK—THE SAN ANTONIO Spurs pulled away from the Sacramento Kings in the closing minutes to win 100-93 on the road on Thursday, their 11th straight victory.

The Spurs, who got 31 points from Manu Ginobili, trailed by a point with 3:35 remaining but went on a 9-0 run to take the game.

Tony Parker fueled the spurt, scoring on back-to-back layups to give San Antonio an 89-86 lead with 2:26 remaining.

Free throws by Ginobili and Tim Duncan pushed the margin to 94-86 before Sacramento scored again.

Ginobili was at his best in the fourth quarter, scoring 16 of his 31 points. He had 11 of the Spurs' first 15 points in the quarter, sinking three three-pointers during the stretch.

Duncan finished with 16 points and 13 rebounds as the Spurs went 4-0 on their road trip. Parker, who was back in the starting lineup after being benched earlier in the week, contributed 15 points and five assists.

Kevin Martin led Sacramento with 26 points and 12 rebounds.

Corliss Williamson added 21 points for the Kings, who had won four straight.

The Kings were playing without Ron Artest, who has been excused from the team after being arrested on domestic violence charges following an incident on Monday.

The victory pushed the Spurs record to 44-18, the third best in the NBA. But they still trail both the Dallas Mavericks, who have a 16-game winning streak, and the Phoenix Suns in the Western Conference.

The Chicago Bulls beat the Orlando Magic, 100-76, on the road. *Reuters*

Chinese clog NBA website

NEW YORK—WITH ONE VIEWER IN five coming from China and more than half from beyond US borders, NBA.com set records for video replays in February and was ranked the world's third most popular website.

The National Basketball Association announced the figures here Thursday, citing 10 language-specific areas including a Hong Kong entry unveiled at the start of the current season.

Nearly 15 million US visits and 30.5 million videos accessed last month set records, the third month in a row for record viewership with video viewing levels 25 percent above last year.

Daily traffic rankings by Alexa Internet, a service owned by Amazon.com comparing global internet sites, show NBA.com trailing only ESPN and Yahoo! Sports websites among viewers of sports-interest websites. *AFP*

Federer's record awes Murray

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—British teenager Andy Murray, the last player to beat Roger Federer, is in awe of the records piled up by the dominant Swiss.

Since Murray upset the world number one in the Cincinnati second round last August, Federer has equaled Bjorn Borg's total of 41 match wins in a row and stayed on top of the rankings for 161 consecutive weeks.

"It must be so hard to keep a run like that going," world number 14 Murray told reporters on Thursday as he prepared for the Pacific Life Open.

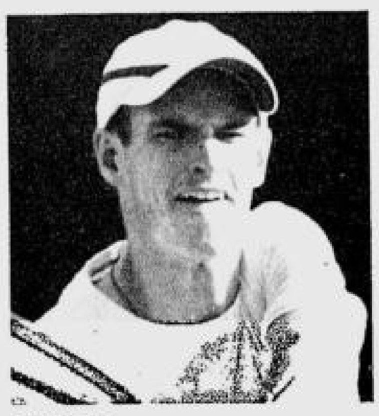
"When you've won so many tournaments and so many slams, to keep yourself mentally focused for every tournament is obviously great.

"And I guess it makes my win look better against him given that he's now won 41 in a row."

Although in awe of Federer's achievements, Murray is not at all surprised.

"He doesn't lose very often and the year before I think he lost just five or six times," said the 19-year-old Scot, who successfully defended his San Jose Open title last month. "It's not really a huge surprise because he's one of the best players to ever play the game."

FEDERER


MURRAY

Seeded 13th at Indian Wells and sporting a close-cropped hairstyle this week, Murray is delighted with his own start to the year.

"I played well in all the tournaments and I haven't played too many bad matches," said the Briton, who reached the Doha final in January and the semi-finals in Memphis two weeks ago.

"To win a tournament early in the year is good and I was pleased to get to the fourth round of the Australian Open when I had a bad run last year (losing in the first round).

"I think I'm 15 (wins) and three (losses) this year, which is a good way to start. I wasn't expecting to start as well but I did work hard in the off-season."

Murray, who fought back to beat Croatian Ivo Karlovic, 6-7, 6-4, 7-6, in the San Jose final, says he is more focused on becoming a better player than breaking into the top 10.

"It's not all about winning just now, it's about improving my game so that when I do get to 22 or 23 years old, I'll be a much more complete player," he added.

"I want to try and practice serve-volley, work on coming to the net more and play more aggressively some times.

"It's not about getting into the top 10 just now," added the Scot, who will meet either South African Wesley Moodie or Czech Lukas Dlouhy in the second round at Indian Wells.

"I just need to take care of my game. If I do improve my game, I think I'm going to get there.

"I'd much rather be ranked 50 in the world and reach the finals of a slam than be ranked five or six and just play consistently the whole year. I want to be able to build my game so when the slams come, I will be able to go deep into the tournaments."

Asked about his new haircut, Murray replied: "I just felt like a change. It was a rush of blood, I guess.

"I haven't had it done like this since I was about 14 so it's a big change. But I've no regrets." *Reuters*

AIRBORNE: River Plate's Marco Ruben (right) vies for the ball with Jorge Rojas of Caracas F.C. during the Copa Libertadores 2007 at the Monumental stadium in Buenos Aires Thursday. AFP

King bests Ukrainian as Pacific Open starts

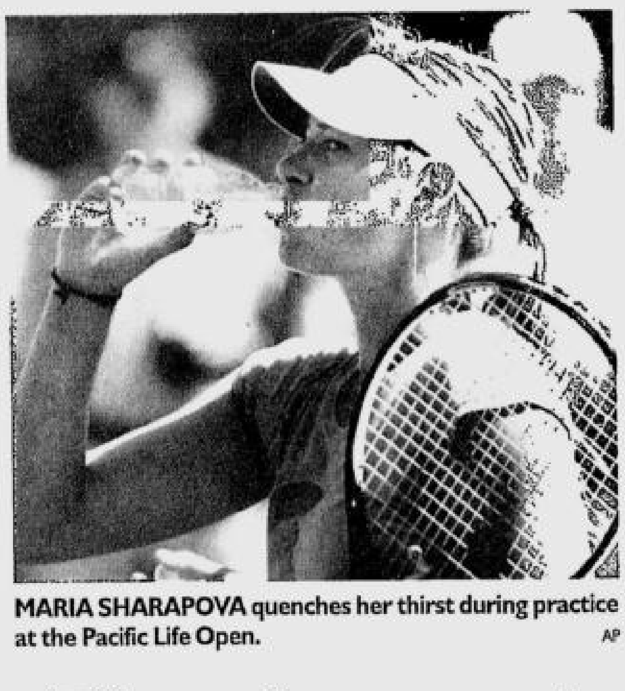
INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—AMERICAN teenager Vania King overcame a bout of nerves to beat Ukraine's Katerina Bondarenko, 6-4, 3-6, 7-5, in the Pacific Life Open first round on Thursday.

King, who next meets 10th-seeded Ana Ivanovic of Serbia, was relieved to win her opening match at a WTA event for only the second time this season. King reached the second round in Pattaya City last month.

Lucky loser Anastassia Rodionova of Russia, who gained a late entry into the 96-strong draw after compatriot and fifth seed Elena Dementieva pulled out with a rib injury on Wednesday, brushed aside Finland's Emma Laine, 6-1 6-4.

Other winners included Russian Elena Likhovtseva, who beat Japan's Akiko Morigami, 6-3, 6-2, and Chinese Yuan Meng, who came back to beat Virginie Razzano of France, 5-7, 6-1, 6-1.

The seeded players enter the fray in Friday's second round when Russian world number one Maria Sharapova take on Michaella Krajicek of the Netherlands. Sharapova crushed Dementieva, 6-1, 6-2, in last year's final. *Reuters*


MARIA SHARAPOVA quenches her thirst during practice at the Pacific Life Open. AP

Criticism mounts over Tiger's event

WOODS

PALM HARBOR, FLORIDA—Saying he was "insulted" by the prospect of Tiger Woods' new tournament being treated like an invitational, Rich Beem said he would rally players against the US PGA Tour to make sure the event had a full field.

"It's the most totally wrong thing I've heard of in a long time that's sticking it to the players," Beem said on Thursday.

Tour commissioner Tim Finchem has said that the AT&T National, to be played from July 5-8 in Washington with Woods as the host, likely would be considered along the lines of tournaments run by Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer that have limited fields.

Nicklaus' Memorial Tournament has a minimum of 105 players, while the Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill has a minimum of 120 players, although 133 eligible players already have committed to play next week in Orlando.

Finchem said several details have not been finalized for the new tournament, which will be run by the Tiger Woods Foundation.

"I've had some preliminary conversations with our board and I have to believe that we will work with Tiger and the foundation to fine-tune it," Finchem said on Wednesday. "But my guess is that at the end of the day, the field size will be commensurate with what you generally see in invitationals, which is a somewhat limited field."

This caught several players by surprise.

"I was shocked when I heard that," Brad Faxon said. *AP*

Spain struggles for survival in Europe football

PARIS—SPAIN'S LOVE-HATE RElationship with European competition this season endured another rollercoaster journey in the UEFA Cup on Thursday with neither of the country's four sides managing to scrape a win.

The night of mediocrity followed on from Barcelona and Real Madrid's exits from the Champions League.

It also meant that not one of the seven Spanish sides plying in Europe this week managed to win although Valencia at least avoided the Champions League cull with a 0-0 draw with Inter Milan to move into the last eight.

On Thursday, UEFA Cup holders Sevilla, the current Spanish league leaders, were held to a 2-2 draw at home by Shakhtar Donetsk of Ukraine and needed a goal in the dying minutes to rescue a draw in their fourth round tie which featured three penalties.

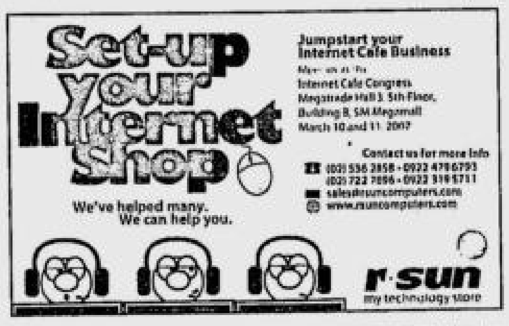
Celta Vigo lost 1-0 at home to Germany's Werder Bremen, Espanyol drew 0-0 at Maccabi Haifa while Osasuna came back from Glasgow Rangers with a 1-1 draw.

Luis Marti gave Sevilla an eighth-minute lead from the spot against Shakhtar who were level 11 minutes later through their Czech international defender Tomas Hubschman.

Brazilian midfielder Matuzalem then put Shakhtar ahead on the hour from the spot before the Spaniards guaranteed a share of the spoils through an 88th-minute penalty from Italian Enzo Maresca.

The draw was particularly pleasing for Shakhtar who were missing key players Olexandr Kucher, Mariusz Lewandowski and Ciprian Marica through suspension.

Hugo Almeida scored the only goal of the game six minutes from time to give Werder a 1-0 win at Celta while, in Glasgow, Raul Garcia's 17th-minute opener for Osasuna was cancelled out by an injury-time equaliser from French defender Brahim Hemdani. *AFP*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Swabe ang dating,
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Exports jumped 27.3% in January to $4.17B

Fastest pace in 7 years

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo listens intently as PDF 2007 co-chairperson and World Bank Country Director Joachim von Amsberg (right) gives the summation of the three-day meeting with development partners in Marco Polo hotel, Cebu City. Also in photo are PDF chairperson and Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and Trade Secretary Peter Favila (partially hidden). LYN RILLON

By Doris C. Dumlao

EXPORTS SURGED 27.3 PERCENT IN JANUARY FROM A YEAR earlier to $4.17 billion, the fastest annual pace in more than seven years as key semiconductor shipments rebounded, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday.

Electronic shipments, accounting for more than half of total exports, rose 14.5 percent to $2.4 billion in January from a year ago, reversing the previous month's 12-percent drop, but the industry warned the jump was likely due to a delay in December shipments and was unsustainable as global demand was cooling.

"It's a one-off thing. The whole of (the first quarter of) 2007 would be weaker than the fourth quarter of 2006 because of soft market conditions," Ernie Santiago, executive director of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Inc., was quoted by Reuters as saying. "The market conditions now are soft because there are excess inventories."

"This is the highest single-month increase since September 1999, coming from a decline the previous month," Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said.

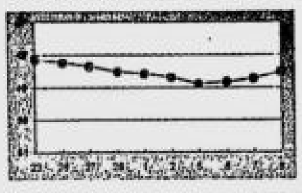
But economists and exporters themselves fear that the sector would not be able to sustain a robust growth for the rest of the year given the projected slowdown in the United States, the world's biggest economy and consumer of imported goods.

Paul Donovan, a London-based economist with UBS, said: "In the Philippines, we can't expect exports to be a strong positive contributor this year. Net exports will likely have a

EXPORTS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

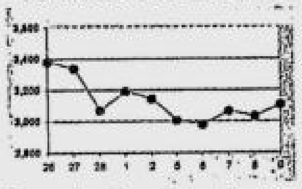


₱ 48.545 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 8, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 2.36% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 2.36-PERCENT higher yesterday, supported by strong export figures for January and the overnight gains on Wall Street, dealers said.

The composite index added 71.45 points to 3,099.82 after trading between 3,028.37 and 3,112.10. The broader all-share index rose 40.04 points to 1,991.

Advancers led decliners 102 to 19, with 35 stocks unchanged.

SHARES/ B2

Big budget deficit seen in first quarter

THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS TO INCUR a budget deficit of P45.8 billion in the first quarter—or two-thirds of its P63-billion deficit ceiling for 2007—due to the front-loading of infrastructure spending to avoid the election ban, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. said.

The accelerated spending was programmed in the first three months of the year to take advantage of the good weather and to move ahead of a 45-day ban on approving infrastructure projects during the run-up to the elections in May, Andaya explained in a statement from Cebu.

"These targets generally track the 2006 fiscal turnout and supports the target of balancing the budget by 2008," Andaya said.

The quarterly budget deficits, based on a new program drawn up by the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee, are then expected to decline in the succeeding quarters. For the second quarter, the ceiling was set at P14.6 billion. For the third and fourth quarter, the cap was set at P22.7 billion and P9 billion, respectively.

The government was able to slash its budget deficit from P146.5 billion in 2005 to an eight-year low of P62.2 bil-

BIG BUDGET/ B2

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TOYOTA moving forward

China opens door to RP's ICTSI

Port operator buys into Yantai Gangtong Container Terminal

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT has given International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) the go-ahead to proceed with its first venture into the Chinese port market by converting port operator Yantai Gangtong Container Terminal Co. Ltd. (YCT) into a joint venture company.

This paves the way for ICTSI's entry into the booming Chinese market as part of its aggressive international expansion.

ICTSI told the Philippine Stock Exchange in a disclosure that on March 8, it received regulatory approval to buy 60 percent of YCT for P2.45 billion. Of the amount, ICTSI said it had paid P734 million.

The Yantai Port Group and State Development & Investment Corp. Communications (SDIC) have each kept a 20-percent stake in YCT under the joint venture, which will run for 30 years.

SDIC's parent company is the largest state-owned investment holding firm in China.

"The joint venture agreement of the parties has, therefore, become effective... The conversion of YCT into a Sino-foreign joint venture enterprise under PRC (People's Republic of China) laws has also been approved," ICTSI told the PSE.

The Yantai Gangtong Terminal project will be the latest addition to the company's growing portfolio of local and international operations.

RAZON

The Philippine-based global port operator has an experience record that spans container terminal operation in six continents.

Located within the Port of Yantai, Gangtong Container Co. operates container berths 38/39 of the Yantai Gangtong Terminal, including a 280,000-square meter container yard and back up area.

Ranking 10th among the ports in China, Yantai Port is one of the country's pivotal ports.

In 2006, it handled 1.169 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), representing a 68.4 percent growth over the 2005 volume.

Aside from China, ICTSI wants to venture into Latin America and India to continue its aggressive international expansion.

"We are continuously looking ... We are looking in India and Latin America," chair and president Enrique Razon Jr. had said.

C&P creditors agree to swap bonds

By Daxim L. Lucas

OVER 94 PERCENT OF THE CREDITORS OF C&P Homes Inc. holding 1990s-era floating rate notes have accepted the proposal to refinance expensive debt with longer term bonds and company shares.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), the property developer said creditors owning $126 million in floating rate notes have accepted the company's debt buy-back program.

Refinancing the company's debt will allow the listed firm to benefit from the prevailing low interest rate regime as well as the ongoing boom in the real estate industry.

The company is still smarting from the effects of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, which forced it to restructure its debt with various foreign and local creditors.

According to C&P Homes, it will replace the $126 million in floating rate notes to be retired with a combination of $46.7 million in 15-year long term notes and 749.1 million in new shares worth P8 each.

The company did not reveal, however, how much in interest payments it would save by swapping its debt papers or when its new shares would be listed on the exchange.

Holders of floating rate notes who will not accept the said offer will be repaid in cash on a discounted basis, the company said.

Earlier, C&P Homes chief financial officer Estrellita Tan said the transaction "will drastically reduce our debt and significantly strengthen our balance sheet."

"This, in turn, will give C&P the flexibility to aggressively pursue various strategic options in the near- to medium-term," she added.

As of its 2005 financial statements, the firm was struggling under P13.2 billion worth of assorted debt and liabilities, although this represented an improvement over the P16.3 billion it reported in the previous year.

In search for oil, Chevron to go over old RP data

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN FIRM CHEVRON CORP, THROUGH its local subsidiaries, has proposed to reprocess all seismic data gathered all over the country from as far back as the early 1970s.

Energy Undersecretary Guillermo Balce said that, by doing this, Chevron might rediscover oil and gas potential in areas that had either been abandoned or had yet to be explored.

"There have been other entities that have given similar proposals," Balce told reporters in a recent interview. "The purpose usually is to enable them to look at the potential of old and new areas. This is more economical than running new surveys."

Depending on the results of its data reprocessing, Balce said Chevron could possibly undertake oil and gas exploration activities, either on its own or with other interested investors.

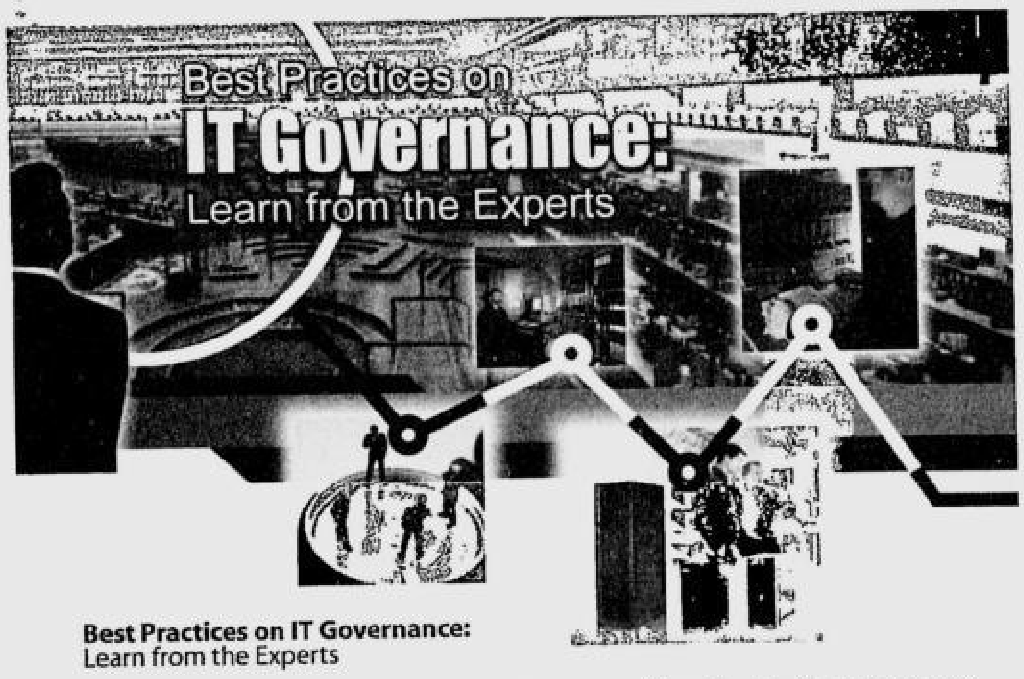
"If they find good potential in an already awarded service contract, they can farm in," he said. "If they find potential in a block that is not yet taken, they can apply for a service contract and explore for themselves."

Chevron, through Chevron Malampaya LLC, holds a 45-percent stake in the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project in Palawan.

Shell Philippines Exploration BV also holds a 45-percent stake, while PNOC Exploration Corp. accounts for the remaining 10 percent.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said Chevron wanted to explore the country for oil and gas potential.

He also said that the Department of Energy expects some $116 million in new investments this year from five petroleum service contractors.



Best Practices on IT Governance:
Learn from the Experts

Over the years, more and more organizations are realizing the significant impact of information technology on its survival and success. In particular, successful enterprises should understand the risk and exploit the benefits of IT and undermine ways to ensure that its IT strategy is aligned with its business strategy. Imperatively, these strategies and goals should be cascaded to the entire organization with determined organizational structures that facilitate the implementation of the identified strategies. Also, organizations should insist that an IT control framework be adopted and implemented to efficiently and effectively measure IT performance vis-à-vis its business goals.

Understand the issues and the strategic importance of IT in ensuring business growth and success.

Listen to experts as they share proven technologies and best practices in data and information management, business continuity, power management techniques, and business security issues in sustaining operations and ensuring that IT expectations are met.

Date: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm, March 12, 2007,
Ballroom 2 Dusit Hotel Nikko
Makati City

RSVP: Maricel Marcelo, 6883182
mmarcelo@msi-ecs.com.ph

1:30 - 2:15 pm	Best Practices on IT Governance - Lessons & Experiences Learned: (IBM Rational Portfolio Manager Customer Success) Randel Dean Powell, PMP WWW ISV and Developer Skills Team Manager IBM
	Enterprise Content Management JP Vicente IBM
2:15 - 3:00 pm	Diffusing "Best of Breed": Multi-Layered Security Speaker Benjamin Teh, Sales Director - South Asia Fortinet
3:00 - 3:15 pm	Coffee Break
3:15 - 4:00 pm	High Availability Solution Ian de la Rosa, Enterprise Business Development Manager APC
4:00 - 4:45 pm	IT Governance is All About Compliance Sal Fernando, EMC Program Manager - Asia Pacific EMC

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Exports . . .

From page B1

slight negative contribution but not in a way that will cause a crisis."

Despite the contraction in the shipment of major commodity groups like agro-based products (-18 percent) and petroleum products (-21.6 percent), the NSO said total exports surged as forest, mineral and manufactured items posted hefty gains of 231.4 percent, 125.2 percent and 17.4 percent, respectively.

Mineral product exports went up largely due to the increase in copper (223.3 percent) and copper concentrate (139.1 percent) shipments, with copper prices in the world market rising 19.76 percent year-on-year, he noted.

Sales of other mineral products such as gold, iron and chromium ore also contributed significantly to the expansion, growing by 71.9 percent, 28.7 percent and 131.7 percent, respectively.

The Philippines processes about 10 percent of the world's semiconductor manufacturing products, including mobile phone chips.

While the US and Japan remained as the biggest buyers of goods from the Philippines, January's export jump mirrored strong shipments to neighboring electronics hubs such as South Korea and Taiwan.

Big budget . . .

From page B1

lion in 2006, although this was largely due to severe belt-tightening measures prompted by Congress' failure to enact a national budget for the year, forcing fiscal managers to use the previous year's budget.

But the government's economic team said that reforms were taking hold and they were on track to meet the "aggressive but achievable" goal of a balanced budget by 2008.

They vowed to use recent fiscal gains to invest an additional P369 billion over the next four years to build infrastructure and to improve social services such as education.

Under the DBCC program, government revenues are expected to be weakest in the first quarter at P255.8 billion against an expenditure of P301.6 billion.

But despite front-loaded spending in the first quarter, expenditures in the third quarter are programmed to be the highest during the year at P301.7 billion, but revenues for the period are projected to hit P279 billion.

Part of the plan for this year is to help raise the competitiveness of the Mindanao Agribusiness region by investing about P5 billion to build the Laguindingan and Butuan airports, access roads to roll-on, roll-off ports and the Surigao-Davao coastal road, among others. *Doris C. Dumlao*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 9, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11	11.25	11	11	102,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	56	57.5	56	57	2,311,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	65.5	65	65.5	1,814,400
China Banking Corp.	850	850	850	850	1,610
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.51	0.52	0.5	0.5	5,570,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	98	101	98	100	8,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	59	61	59	60	4,620,600
Philippine National Bank	46	47.5	46	47.5	8,600
Phil. Savings Bank	60	63	59	63	53,200
Security Bank Corp.	76	78	76	77	652,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	58	58	58	58	9,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	170,000
Citiseconline Com Inc.	6.2	6.7	6.2	6.6	980,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1600	1600	1600	50
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.86	1.88	194,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	700	720	700	715	106,070
Ivantage Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	574,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.7	6	5.7	5.8	53,379,000
First Gen Corp.	51.5	52.5	51.5	51.5	1,751,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	71.5	72	71.5	72	683,200
Manila Electric Co. A	70	71	69.5	70.5	781,100
Manila Electric Co. B	70	71	69.5	71	4,518,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	3,155,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4,712,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.23	0.25	0.23	0.25	3,050,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.36	1,348,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	30,000
Con Azucar De Tarlac	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	3,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	49	50.5	49	50.5	285,800
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	90,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	20,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	130,000
San Miguel Corp. A	62.5	62.5	61.5	62	48,800
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71.5	71	71.5	40,700
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	1.96	2	1.94	1.98	1,647,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.25	18	18	3,014,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.56	29,853,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.4	4.55	4.4	4.5	5,043,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	450,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6.2	6.2	6	6	24,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.4	5.7	5.4	5.7	640,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.85	815,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.33	0.35	27,490,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	71,000,000
Ayala Corp.	555	565	555	555	362,950
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	120,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8	8	7.9	8	793,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.9	6.9	5.6	5.7	10,969,000
Alo Net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	9,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	38,000
APC Group Inc.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	12,490,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	509,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.48	1.48	9,031,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.5	17,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	5	5	4.8	4.8	292,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	4,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.45	3.3	3.35	44,443,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.4	7.1	6.4	7.1	1,947,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.8	4.95	4.8	4.95	157,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.42	2.55	2.42	2.5	84,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	400,400
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	550,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.2	7.2	1,600,000
Mulutech Inv. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	471,000
Pacifica	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	16,400,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	2,000,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	8,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	400,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.195	0.195	0.19	0.19	12,280,000
SM Investments Corp.	350	350	350	350	690,700
South China Resources Inc.	1.02	1.18	1.02	1.18	111,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.66	1.68	1.64	1.64	618,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	20,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	16	16.25	15.75	16	13,679,200
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	90,000
Belle Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.34	12,931,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	310,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.45	0.54	0.45	0.5	20,570,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.9	3.7	3.9	1,385,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.55	3	2.55	2.8	4,896,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	110,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.79	0.75	0.77	43,100,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.86	1.82	1.86	300,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.58	1.56	1.56	1.58	36,789,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	80,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	1,350,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.82	0.83	2,710,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	100,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,300,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.85	3.05	2.85	3	72,294,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4,000
Mrc Allied Ind. Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.7	0.7	3,570,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	141,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	19.75	4,195,300
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.58	0.62	0.58	0.59	7,930,000
SM Development Corp.	3.95	4.05	3.95	4	2,677,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	23,513,500
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.66	0.69	0.62	0.65	860,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.15	7,560,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.75	23	23.5	173,800
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	21,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.72	1.72	1.68	1.7	10,708,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1345	1365	1345	1345	31,820
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.7	4,195,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2350	2385	2350	2360	243,890
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.245	0.25	5,820,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4	4	3.8	3.8	62,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	8,200,000
Ionics Inc.	2.44	2.44	2.3	2.3	171,000
IPVG Corp.	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.6	736,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.0575	0.055	0.0575	19,100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.06	0.065	42,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.74	1.74	1.66	1.66	1,288,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.04	2.1	2.04	2.06	302,000
Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.047	0.044	0.046	435,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.2	88,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	378,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.3	7,986,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.9	0.93	0.9	0.92	860,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	10,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.65	2.8	2.65	2.7	4,130,000
Paxys Inc.	24.75	25.5	24.75	25	666,100
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.48	1.7	1.48	1.68	292,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.2	505,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5	5.5	5	5.3	130,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	60,300,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.5	8.9	8.5	8.7	840,000
Benguet Corp. A	11	11.25	11	11.25	68,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	93,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.38	1.4	82,356,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	15,620,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	15,290,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	140,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.033	172,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	3,093,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.15	17,349,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.5	19	17.5	18.75	618,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	1,250,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.1	1.18	1.1	1.12	5,474,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.31	0.33	0.31	0.33	9,750,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	465,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	157,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	71,700,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	5,000

CURRENCIES

March 9, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.761789	1.000000	48.6220
Japan	Yen	0.006506	0.008541	0.4153
United Kingdom	Pound	1.469262	1.928700	93.7773
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097505	0.127995	6.2234
Switzerland	Franc	0.620500	0.814531	39.6041
Canada	Dollar	0.645584	0.847458	41.2051
Singapore	Dollar	0.498814	0.654793	31.8373
Australia	Dollar	0.590900	0.775675	37.7149
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.020713	2.652590	128.9742
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.203219	0.266766	12.9707
Brunei	Dollar	0.497186	0.652656	31.7334
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023155	0.030395	1.4779
UAE	Dirham	0.207465	0.272339	13.2417
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.312700	63.8261
Korea	Won	0.000804	0.001055	0.0513
China	Yuan**	0.098422	0.129199	6.2819
Argentina	Peso	0.245540	0.322321	15.6719
Brazil	Real	0.361895	0.475059	23.0983
Denmark	Kroner	0.134288	0.176280	8.5711
India	Rupee	0.017239	0.022630	1.1003
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217281	0.285225	13.8682
Mexico	New Peso	0.068245	0.089585	4.3558
New Zealand	Dollar	0.521916	0.685119	33.3119
Norway	Kroner	0.122899	0.161329	7.8441
South Africa	Rand	0.103788	0.136243	6.6244
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023152	0.030391	1.4777

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 8, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 8, 2007

Shares close . . .

From page B1

Volume was 6.08 billion shares worth P4.53 billion.

"The encouraging economic figures provided some encouragement amid the continued volatility," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

"But we're not sure if we can sustain these gains. We might see more choppy movements next week because, to a certain extent, the performance of overseas markets will continue to have an impact on us," De Leon said. *AFP*

Banks' soured credit card exposure declining

THE LOCAL BANKING INDUSTRY'S CONSUMER lending portfolio has improved in the fourth quarter of 2006, with the ratio of its bad credit card exposure to total plastic-based loans easing to 16.4 percent from 19.3 percent in the previous quarter, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

The BSP, however, noted that soured auto loans inched up to 5.2 percent of total auto lending, compared with the third quarter's 5 percent.

The credit card receivables of universal, commercial and thrift banks, including those of their subsidiaries, amounted to P99.6 billion at end-2006, of which the past due was P16.3 billion.

"The easing was a result of the containment in past due credit card receivables coupled with the double-digit growth in total credit card lending," the BSP reported.

The banks' total credit card billing in the fourth quarter last year went up by 15.2 percent from the previous quarter and by 20.3 percent from year-ago level.

Local banks, especially the bigger players, have been expanding their consumer lending portfolio to compensate for the slack in demand from other sectors, including the corporate sectors.

The banking system's credit card receivables in the fourth quarter accounted for 5.1 percent of its total loan portfolio, up from 4.7 percent at end-September.

In the meantime, system-wide automobile loans reached P72.2 billion, up by 6.2 percent from a quarter ago and by 17.9 percent from year-ago. Of the total, past due loans amounted to P3.7 billion, or 2.2 percent of the banking system's aggregate nonperforming loans.

Thrift banks kept their lending lead over commercial banks in the automobile sector, accounting for 65.6 percent of total.

'06 FDI flows exceed goal

Whole-year net investments hit $2.35B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY RAKED IN $2.35 BILLION in net foreign direct investments in 2006, exceeding the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' $2 billion target for the year. BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said the 2006 figure was $491 million higher than the previous year's $1.85 billion.

For December alone, the net FDI flows went up by 5.7 percent from year-ago level to hit $130 million.

"The strong FDI inflows were sustained as the country continued to post significant macroeconomic gains in 2006, including strong external payments position, better-than-expected fiscal position, and declining inflation," Tetangco said.

Unlike portfolio investments which are more volatile, FDIs represent investments in brick-and-mortar businesses that are capital- and labor-intensive. These include investments in factories, power plants, mining ventures and other enterprises. They are considered the least volatile form of financial flows.

Tetangco said equity investments, rising by 9 percent to $1.29 billion, were infused into manufacturing services, real estate, financial intermediation, mining and construction industries.

The manufacturing sub-sectors that benefited from the infusion were chemical, healthcare, steel products, electronics and air-conditioning system. In services, the gainers were those engaged in business process outsourcing, shipping crew training and medical research.

The major sources of FDI flows during the period, according to BSP records, were Japan, the United States, the Netherlands, Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland.

A new global phenomenon called "south-to-south flows," characterized by rapidly rising capital flows between developing countries, has also opened opportunities for the Philippines to hedge against external shocks by attracting more stable investments.

This phenomenon—identified in the World Bank Global Development Finance (GDF) 2006 as a potential global catalyst alongside deepening financial integration among developing countries—has been gaining momentum in the Philippines.

Although south-south capital flows remained relatively small compared to north-to-south flows, the GDF said "they have the potential to change the landscape of development finance over the next few years, particularly if growth in developing countries continues to outstrip that in advanced countries."

Araneta earmarks P5B for expansion

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE RISING DEMAND FOR SPACE to house business process outsourcing companies has prompted the Araneta group to push through with plans to invest about P5 billion in the construction of more office buildings.

Of the amount, Araneta group chair and chief executive Jorge L. Araneta said P2.5 billion would go to the expansion of its flagship Gateway Mall in the Araneta Center. This would include the construction of a 20-story office building and six floors of additional retail space.

The other half will be spent for the construction of seven to 10 buildings within its proposed Araneta Cyberpark, an eight-hectare property at the corner of P. Tuazon and Edsa, for BPO and call center companies.

Araneta said the demand for office space had been "tremendous" and Araneta Center was feeling the BPO and call center boom in the Philippines because of its proximity to residential centers and its being a transportation hub.

He said the expansion of Gateway should be completed in less than two years, while the cyberpark is set to turn over its first building to Apac, a US-based call center firm, by the end of the month.

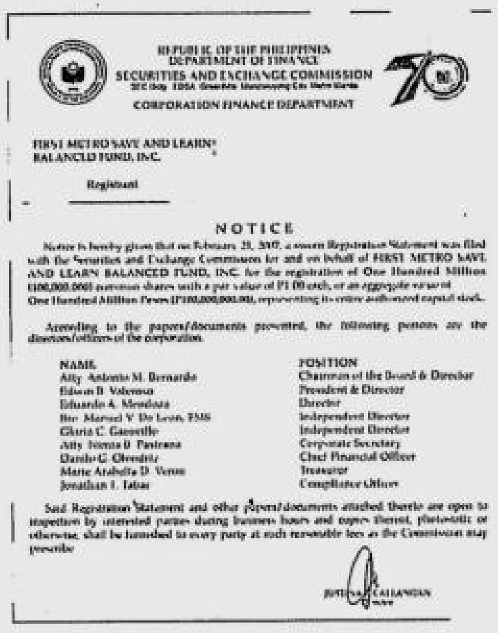
The Araneta group is consulting with BPO and call center firms to determine the market's specific needs.

The Cyberpark and Gateway Mall are major components of the Araneta Center's redevelopment program, which kicked off in 2000.

Araneta said the group had invested more than P4 billion over the past six years, the bulk of which went to the Gateway Mall and the renovation of the other shopping centers, such as Ali Mall and Farmer's Plaza.

The flagship Gateway mall was recently named Shopping Center of the Year by the Philippine Retailers Association and it received a Merit Award during the 2006 International Design and Development Awards sponsored by the International Council of Shopping Centers.

Araneta is also bullish about the prospects of Manhattan Garden City project, a joint venture with Megaworld.



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN BALANCED FUND, INC.

Registrant

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on February 21, 2007, a sworn Registration Statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of FIRST METRO SAVE AND LEARN BALANCED FUND, INC. for the registration of One Hundred Million (100,000,000) common shares with a par value of P1.00 each, or an aggregate value of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00), representing its entire authorized capital stock.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation.

NAME	POSITION
Atty. Antonio M. Bernardo	Chairman of the Board & Director
Edison B. [illegible]	President & Director
Eduardo A. Mendoza	Director
Rev. Manuel V. De Leon, FMS	Independent Director
Gloria C. [illegible]	Independent Director
Atty. [illegible] B. Pastrana	Corporate Secretary
Danilo G. Olondriz	Chief Financial Officer
Marie Arabella D. Veron	Treasurer
Jonathan T. Tabac	Compliance Officer

Said Registration Statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

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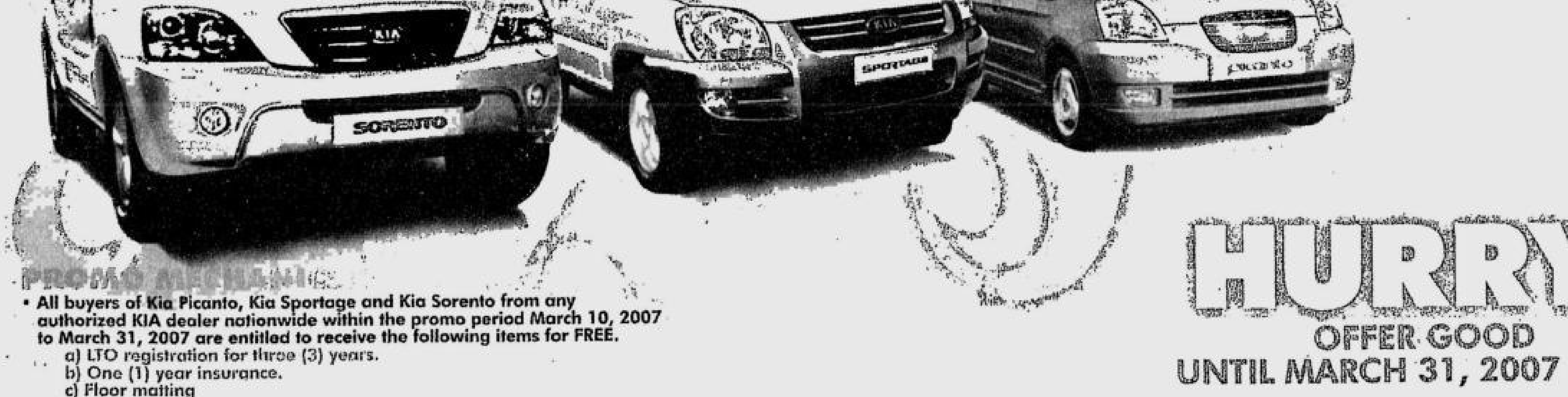

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Angeles City	Holiday Inn	Feb. 27	12p-5:30p
Cebu	Marriott Hotel	March 3 - 4	10a-4p
Davao	Marco Polo Hotel	March 10 -11	10a-4p

IMPORTANT! Please don't forget to bring all of the following:

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Securities and Exchange Commission, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified local bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **JANITORIAL MANPOWER SERVICES CONTRACT** for SEC Main Office, SEC Building, EDSA Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) is **FIVE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED SEVENTY EIGHT THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY FOUR and 90/100 CENTAVOS (Php 5,778,164.90)** including supply cost. The contract is for one (1) year from the date of the signing of the Contract for 16 janitors, 15 haulers, 1 electrician, 1 Carpenter/Plumber, 2 utility man and 1 supervisor all rendering eight (8) hours duty for six (6) days a week from Monday to Saturday.

a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, or
b. Partnership duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the interest belongs to citizen of the Philippines; or
c. Corporation duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least seventy five percent (75%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizen of the Philippines; or
d. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

A complete set of bidding documents may be obtained starting **March 12, 2007** at the General Services Division, 4th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00). For further details, please contact Mr. Norlan M. De las Alas at Tel. No. 727-3320. Only those bidders who purchased the Bid Documents are allowed to attend the Pre-Bid Conference.

Pre-Bid conference will be on **March 16, 2007, 10:00 a.m.** at the Hearing Room No. 4, Compliance and Enforcement Division, 5th Floor, SEC Building.

Deadline for submission of bids will be on **March 28, 2007, 10:00 a.m.** to General Services Division (GSD) at the 4th Floor, SEC Building and immediately thereafter, opening of bids will be at Hearing Room No. 4, Compliance and Enforcement Department, 5th Floor, SEC Building will be at EDSA, Mandaluyong City.

Republic Act 9184, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) shall govern all particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation, Post Qualification and Awards of Contracts.

The SEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formalities therein and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposal as evaluated is most advantgeous to the Commission.

SEC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that any award will be made.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. AQUINO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - March 10, 2007)

NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
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More Classified Ads:

National Food Authority-Region VIII	A23
Provincial Government of Bukidnon	A23
Department of Labor and Employment-NCR	A24
Department of Health	A24

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
Direct Line: 636-6543 / Telefax: 636-6542 • Trunk Line: 632-1361 local 2115 • Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

DepED Department of Education

2007 Call for Submission of Elementary Mathematics, Science and Health, and English Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education (DepEd) is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials for their textbooks (TXs) and accompanying teacher's manuals (TMs) for Mathematics Grades 1 to 6, Science and Health Grades 3 to 6, and English Grade 5 intended for use in public schools nationwide starting 2008-2009.

DepEd intends to buy the best sets of textbooks and teacher's manuals that pass content evaluation with a reasonable price offer for the copyright authorization fee to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four areas:
- Area 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Area 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts;
- Area 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Area 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax and check book design

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of **forty thousand pesos (P40, 000)** for each set of textbook and teacher's manual to be evaluated. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check payable to DepEd Trust Account for Textbook Evaluation (Account No. LBP 0672-1027-66).

Only sets of TXs/TMs that meet the cut-off score after undergoing content evaluation under the four areas will be considered for ranking. Publishers will be given a copy of the recommendation of the evaluators at the different areas, which will serve as basis for revising the TXs/TMs prior to submission for bidding.

The materials for elementary Mathematics Grades 1 to 6, Science and Health Grades 3-6, and English Grade 5 must be submitted to the DepEd-Procurement Service (DepEd-PS), 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City not later that **July 31, 2007.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Textbook Call Guidelines and learning competencies for elementary Math and English, bring a blank compact disk to the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) starting **March 5, 2007**. Soft copies of the latest learning competencies for elementary Science and Health will be available after **March 30, 2007**. All inquiries pertaining to this call may be addressed to DepEd-IMCS Evaluation and Training Division staff at tel. nos. (02) 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) **Ramon C. Bacani**
Undersecretary and BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 3 & 10, 2007)

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Col Hubert Mejia Bautista

JAGS PAF (Ret)

Born : November 3, 1938
Died : March 6, 2007

From his beloved wife
Leticia

his children
Jojo & Annie
Gigi
Bambi & Ed
Chito & Dhonna
Joy & Louie

his grandchildren
Camille, Biancci, Patricia, Jan, Denise,
Dominique, Andrea, Jomari, Louise, Luigi

his sisters
Lourdes, married to Voltaire Inventado
Rosario, married to Tito Nastor Inventado

Body lies in state at
Our Lady of All Nations Chapel,
Philippine Air Force Mortuary,
Villamor Air Base, Pasay City

Necrological Service
March 12, 2007
7:00 PM
Philippine Air Force Mortuary

Interment
March 13, 2007
10:00 AM (after the 8AM mass)
Libingan ng mga Bayani Fort Andres Bonifacio
Taguig City

Our Dearly
Beloved Mother

LEONIDA RIVERA SIMEON

(March 21, 1913 – March 9, 2007)

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 9, 2007 at the age of 94.

Her loving husband **CONRADO** (†); children **BLANCA & FELY, BELEN** (†) **& DOY, JOE & RUTH, EDDIE & MARLENE, OLIVE & MENG, BOY & AIDA** and grandchildren request relatives and friends to join them in prayers for her eternal repose in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel A1, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday,
March 11, 2007 at Holy Cross
Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City,
after the celebration
of the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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ERRATUM

In the advertisement of Southville Commercial re: houses, buildings and lots on cash or installment for immediate occupancy published last March 4, 2007, the heading should have read SPECIAL DISCOUNTED SALE and not as published.

Our apologies.

In celebration of his new life...

OSCAR MANGUBAT BRION, M.D.

January 8, 1945 – March 8, 2007

of San Pablo City, Laguna,
entered eternal life at the age of 62.

Diplomate, Philippine Board of Surgery
Fellow, Philippine Society of General Surgeons
Fellow, Philippine College of Surgeons
Fellow, International College of Surgeons
Fellow, Philippine Society for Trauma Surgery
Hospital Director of San Pablo Doctors Hospital
UE College of Medicine Batch '70
UP-PGH Surgery Residency, Batch '75

His loving wife **Dr. Baby Calayan Brion,** his son, **Marc** and daughter **Denise, Mommy Josie Calayan,** siblings **Ludy, Aleli, Carlo, Evie, Mayra, Arnel** and **Larry,** in-laws, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio Chapel, Forbes Park, Makati City. His body will be transferred to San Pablo City and will be viewed at Resurrection Chapel, San Pablo City from Monday, March 12, to Thursday, March 15, 2007.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 15, 2007 at the San Gabriel Memorial Park, San Pablo City, Laguna after the 2:00 p.m. Mass which will be celebrated at the Resurrection Chapel, San Pablo City, Laguna.

"My soul, be at rest in God alone from whom comes my hope".
Psalm 62:6

CAYO URMENETA EMNAS, SR.

of Jaro, Tacloban City and Baybay, Leyte; and Quezon City

peacefully joined his Creator last March 5, 2007
at the age of 75.

A relentless and dedicated crusader, he was a former Ateneo De Manila High School (Quezon City) faculty member (1959-1974); Municipal Secretary (Baybay); Baybay Water District General Manager; and, Leyte Metro Water District (LMWD) General Manager.

He was husband to **Socorro Veloso-Loreto** (deceased) and survived by his children and in-laws: **Cayo, Jr. (Nicky) & Cyndi; Joseph & Linlin; Mannette & Jim; Lino & Yvette; Matthew & Emily; Vincent & Mai Mai; Candy; Herbert William (Wimbie) & Clara;** and grandchildren: **Denyse, Melissa, Kathleen, Trina, Luke, Joshua, Julia, Inno, Gianna** and **Ernest;** sisters-in-law and brother-in-law, nephews and nieces, grandnephews and grandnieces, cousins and other relatives.

His family and relatives request for prayers for the eternal repose of his soul. His body lies in state at the Gomez Funeral Homes in Tacloban City, Leyte and will be transferred to the family home in Caridad, Baybay, Leyte on March 8, 2007. Interment shall be on Sunday, March 11, 2007 at the Baybay Catholic Cemetery after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Leyte State University (VISCA) Chapel.

Death Notice

PRIMA TRINIDAD-MENDOZA

9 June 1920 - 7 March 2007
Retired teacher, principal, supervisor
Division of City Schools of Manila

Her remains lie in state at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Mahinhin Street, UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City.

Interment will be on 11 March 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City at 3 p.m.

In Loving Memory
of our Dearest Mommy

LOURDES CONDE y MUÑOZ Vda. de ATILANO

(d. 10 March 2006)
on the First Anniversary
of her new life with her Heavenly Father and Blessed Mother
and her beloved husband EUDALDO SR.

Masses will be offered for her eternal repose at:

Mount Carmel Shrine, New Manila	6:00 p.m.
St. John the Baptist (Pinaglabanan), San Juan	6:00 p.m.
Mary the Queen, San Juan	6:00 p.m.
St. Francis Parish, Mandaluyong	5:15 p.m.
Mary the Queen Parish, Greenhills, San Juan	7:00 a.m.
Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Cubao	6:00 a.m.
Santuario de San Jose, San Juan	7:15 a.m.
Sta. Maria della Strada, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
Christ the King Parish, Greenmeadows	6:00 p.m.
Stella Orientis Chapel, UA&P Ortigas	12:00 nn
Santuario de San Antonio, Makati	6:00 p.m.
Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Zamboanga City	5:30 p.m
St. Joseph Church, Zamboanga City	5:30 p.m
Fort Pilar Shrine, Zamboanga City	5:00 p.m

Her children, **Jojo, Benjie & Kay, Aton & Tessa, Mitos & Albert, Paeng & Malou;**
Her grandchildren, **Karla & Alpan, Henry, Jeff,** and **Johanna; Kristine, Benpy & Ingrid, Doby,** and **Anda; Caloy & Laurie, Anna & Bobby, Guia, Aisa, Budu,** and **Niña; Annapat, Vincent, Janice, Angelica, Leslie Ann, AJ,** and **Anthony; Iñigo, Ramonna, Raymond,** and **Ryan;**
Her great-grandchildren, **Keena, Bea, Gabbie, Ella,** and **Marta;**
thank you for keeping Mommy in your prayers!

ANCHETA SY GO

August 28, 1928 – March 6, 2007

Her loving husband **Jimmy Go, Sr.** (†)

Children : **Jimmy Go, Jr.** & **Evelyn**
Anne & **John**
George & **Terry**
Melchor & **Susan**
Minnie & **Alberto**
Valentino & **Genevieve**

Grandchildren : **Jake, Jillian, Jessifer, Jeffrey, Teegee, Geetee, Michael, Monique, Mia, Francis, Mary Grace, M.J., Bryan, Ivan** & **Lester**

Brothers and Sisters :
Selvino, Anita (†), **Segundo** (†), **Severo, Sotero, Sixto** (†), **Hock Chuan** (†), **Hock Sing** (†) **Rosita** (†), **Dolores** (†), **Felisa** (†), **Salcedo** (†), **Soriano** (†), **Loreto** (†), **Isidro** (†), **Conchita.**

other relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel De Luxe, La Funeraria Paz Inc., Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on March 14, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. at Heritage Memorial Park.

*** In lieu of flowers, any donation to Jimmy Go Sr. & Ancheta Sy Go Foundation will be highly appreciated.**

CLASSIFIEDS

NFA-FDC conducts seminar

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY'S FOOD Development Center is slated to conduct a seminar workshop on "Rapid Tests and Automated Methods in Microbiology Quality Assurance (QA) Programs" on March 20-23 at the FDC Compound, Tagig City.

This seminar is the 5th of its kind hosted by NFA-FDC for institutional, regulatory and industry technologists, scientists and commercial test representatives. It includes a symposium on advances in rapid detection and automated system in microbiology. The four-day workshop involves intensive lectures, laboratory demonstrations and hands-on exercises.

No less than Dr. Manuel M. Garcia, a renowned microbiologist and food safety expert and FDC's visiting consultant from Canada, will be the seminar's speaker. Garcia has conducted workshops on HACCP and rapid tests in Asia, Australia, China, Latin America and North America. He's been a recipient of the Presidential Award for Outstanding Filipino Overseas twice.

Meanwhile, the symposium on Advances in Rapid Detection and Automated System in Microbiology will cover current trends and the future of rapid testing of foods and the environment. Participants have the option to only take this one-day symposium at a fee of P1,850.

The course fee for the entire four-day seminar is set at P7,250 per person inclusive of a seminar manual, lunches, snacks and shuttle service to and from the Ayala Center in Makati.

Participants are encouraged to make early reservations and payment of the required fees. Checks must be made payable to the NFA-FDC.

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Amelia S. Bautista of the NFA-FDC, FTI Complex, Tagig City at telephone numbers 838-4014; 838-4561; 838-4478 and fax numbers 838-4692 and 838-4016 to 17.

PNP SERVICE DESK PERSONNEL TRAINING GRADUATES

Photo shows the graduates of PNP Service Desk Personnel Training on Feb. 20-23, at Maritime Bldg., Camp Crame, Quezon City and (standing from left) from the office of NHQ DHRDD are PO1 Dionisio, SPO1 Narcise, NUP Gonzales, PO2 Marie Paguio, NUP Lalaine, PSI Tessie Sarmiento, SPO2 Lumabi, PO2 Buenavista; and (seated from right) are Rafael S. Chico - the main Guest Lecturer and President of Interlink Manpower Development, Charmaine C. Moquia – Assistant Facilitator from Interlink and PSupt Mario F. Llorin – Assistant Chief, Unit Training Program Division, DHRDD.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

RP welcomes world's first cervical cancer vaccine

By Charles E. Buban

IN OCTOBER 2006, THE country's Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) approved a vaccine created to inoculate women aged 9 to 26 against four strains of the human papilloma virus, or HPV.

This paved the way for its developer and manufacturer, Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD), to begin marketing the product, which will be known here as Gardacil.

The medical community considers this vaccine a major health breakthrough considering Gardacil is the world's first drug that effectively prevents not only cervical cancer, but genital warts as well.

Cervical cancer is the second biggest cause of female cancer deaths worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. Estimates of the number of deaths from cervical cancer are around 250,000 per year with the prevalence of genital HPV infection in the world pegged at around 440 million.

Half a million cases of cervical cancer are estimated to occur each year, over 80 percent of which happen in developing countries. In the Philippines, more than 7,000 Filipino women in 2005 were infected while killing almost 4,000 of them.

Extremely contagious

According to St. Luke's Medical Center's gynecologic oncology section head, Dr. Mary Christine Palma, the HPV is an extremely contagious sexually transmitted infection.

"With more than 100 strains belonging to this type of virus, a huge percentage of sexually active adults will come into contact with one or two of strains that cause cancer and genital warts at some point of their lives. The HPV can be spread through skin-to-skin contact, making it different from other STIs. This means condom use does not mean one is protected from it," the doctor explained.

Palma explained while HPV is generally harmless and common in young adults, certain strains of HPV can turn sinister and develop into a cancer in women.

"Since most HPV infections have no symptoms, transmission of the virus can, and will, occur easily," she warned.

Infections could develop 10 to 15 years after the initial viral infection

Approval hailed

Since HPV causes virtually all cases of these cervical cancers, the medical community hails the approval of Gardacil (which prevents the four most common—and very risky—strains) as a big step toward eliminating a potentially lethal cancer in women.

Gardacil, whose generic name is Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus (Types 6, 11, 16, 18) Recombinant Vaccine, is proven to be effective only if given before HPV infection. It is recommended that the vaccine be given before an individual is sexually active.

Gardacil is administered in three doses. The second dose is given one month after the first dose is administered, while the third dose is given six months after the first dose (each dose ranges from P5,000 to P7,000).

Cervical cancer

Cervical cancer originates from cervix, the opening to the womb from the vagina. In the cervix, this usually happens in the cells lining the inside of the organ.

But as these normal cells gradually undergo precancerous changes (that later turn into cancer), these however, cannot be seen by the naked eye and produce no symptoms.

"Symptoms usually develop when the cancer has become invasive and replaces nearby normal tissue. When this happens, the most common symptom is abnormal vaginal bleeding," Palma said.

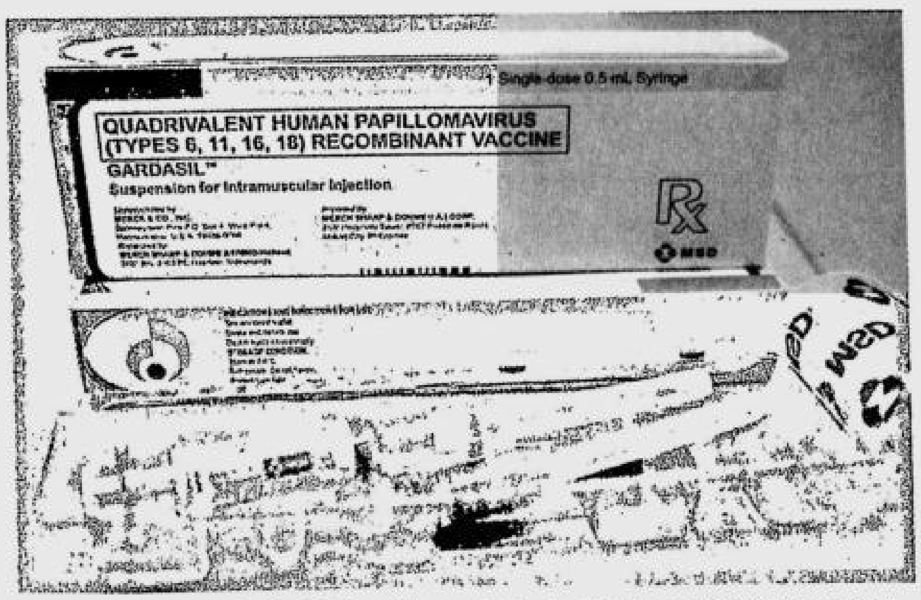
Treatment

If detected in its early stages, most cervical cancer can be treated by surgery, chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

"Which is why awareness as well as visiting an ob-gyn is very crucial. Although doctors have easy and inexpensive ways to detect most precancerous conditions such as using ordinary vinegar or conducting a Pap smear, there is, however, a more accurate means of evaluating whether these inflammatory or infectious changes are harmless or cancerous," Palma informed.

Called colposcopy, this procedure involves a direct magnified inspection of the surface of a woman's genital area, including the cervix, using a light source and a binocular microscope.

"Very few hospitals and clinics offer this procedure but it improves detection of cervical disease and save even more lives than with the current screening that we have here," Palma said.


Single-dose 0.5 mL Syringe
QUADRIVALENT HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS (TYPES 6, 11, 16, 18) RECOMBINANT VACCINE
GARDASIL™
Suspension for Intramuscular Injection
Rx
MSD

CONSIDERED a major health breakthrough, Gardacil is the world's first drug that effectively prevents not only cervical cancer, but genital warts as well.

Cell phones filthier than toilet seats?

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

WHAT IS IT THAT COULD BE AS DIRTY as, sometimes even dirtier than a toilet seat, but we can't seem to live without? Answer: the ubiquitous cell phone. Yes, we would never want our faces nowhere close to a toilet seat, but our cell phones have the privilege of being closely pressed to either of our ears and within a few centimeters of our lips. For some, it's literally glued to their cheeks for hours on end.

Our cell phones are teeming with bacteria, and if we're having recurrent infections of the respiratory tract in the form of coughs and colds, or of the gastro-intestinal tract in the form of loose bowel movement, or hard-to-treat acne on the face that keeps on coming back, your cell phone may be the culprit.

Last year, an elderly businessman was admitted in a Metro Manila hospital thrice in four months—twice for pneumonia and once for infectious diarrhea. The attending physician was at a loss why this apparently healthy individual suddenly became infection-prone. He advised him on cell phone sanitation and the patient has not been readmitted since.

Breeding ground for bacteria

The cell phone can be a virtual Petri dish where various bacteria can multiply and build invisible colonies which can be potent enough to cause a significant infection when one's resistance due to a weakened immune system is reduced. Don't think that what your cell phone has are your own bacteria from your skin or saliva. It has a lot more and the places where it's kept—pockets or purses—provide just the right temperature, darkness and humidity to make it an ideal breeding ground for bacteria.

Most of the bacteria grown in cell phone swabs are harmless, but a few infection-causing bacteria have been isolated the most scary of which is staphylococcus aureus which can cause skin boils, pneumonia, meningitis, gastroenteritis and other potentially serious infections.

The Craigavon Area Hospital Group conducted a study in a hospital in Northern Ireland which showed that cell phones could breed a variety of germs, "more than some of the dirtiest toilet seats." The study was done due to concerns about hospital-acquired infections attributed to Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), a type of bacteria that can be deadly if ingested and is resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

Evidence of bacterial growth

They swabbed the cell phones of 53 doctors and 52 members of the nursing staff and of these 105 phones, 96.2 percent had evidence of bacterial growth and 15 phones (14.3 percent) grew bacteria known to cause infection. This means that one out of 6 or 7 cell phones may be carriers of germs that can infect its user. Two of the phones swabbed contained the deadly form of MRSA. What is striking is that the cell phone users in this study were doctors and nurses who are supposed to be more concerned about sanitation and safety precautions to avoid infections.

Similar results have been shown in studies swabbing cell phones of nonhospital workers. The same conclusion was arrived at by the researchers that cell phones can be a lot filthier than we think they are. The degree of contamination however was less than in the Ireland study using swabs from cell phones of hospital workers.

Even if we're using the most expensive or sleek model, cell phones can be filthy, no doubt about that. But who can live these days without a cell phone. So if we can't do without it, let's make sure we take some precautions to prevent it from becoming the breeding ground of potentially life-threatening bacteria.

Preventing germ transmission

Since our hands are the most frequent source of the germs, we should wash our hands as frequently as possible especially after using the toilet. Frequent handwashing has been shown to be the most effective preventive measure in human-acquired infections. The use of accessories to enable you to use your cell phone without pressing it to your face may also help prevent germ transmission from a contaminated phone.

We should also swab our cell phones with rubbing alcohol at least twice a week. If the manufacturer says this practice might destroy the unit, you just have to make a choice between preserving your precious cell phone or saving yourself from a potentially serious infection that can land you in the hospital. The wise choice is obvious.

How much (info) is enough?

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

AS MENTIONED LAST WEEK, THE UNITED States has observer status to the Convention for Biological Diversity, and thus cannot ratify the resulting Cartagena Protocol. Despite this, the United States is deeply involved with the CBD, and already had a regulatory document in place concerning genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as early as 1986.

Like Canada, Japan and the Philippines, the task of regulating GMOs has fallen to more than one agency. In this case, the job was split between the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which oversees the food supply and must be consulted before any GM product goes on the market; the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA Aphis), which determines whether or not a GM plant can affect its surrounding environment; and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which monitoring any genetic modifications made against viruses, bacteria or insects.

No 'unique' risks

Of all three, it is the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine that has most recently been in the news regarding GMOs. As mentioned a few columns ago, at the end of last year, the FDA released a draft guidance document which stated that, to the best of their knowledge, there were no "unique" risks found in GM—specifically, cloned—animals raised for consumption such as cows, goats and pigs "or their progeny compared with conventionally bred comparators. "By conventional, the FDA meant animals raised from "natural" matings and those that resulted from assisted reproductive technology (ART).

In other words, products from these GM animals meant for human and animal consumption, such as milk, meat, or animal feed, were safe to eat. In fact, they said, based on their analyses of the data at hand, the risks are within the limits of those for animals raised via assistive reproductive techniques (ART) or natural mating.

The review document is available for public comment until the end of the month; if it is approved, GM animal products could legally hit the market as early as next year. Despite the demands for full disclosure and decision-making transparency that are common to all four nations referenced these last few weeks, the FDA notes in their review of the risk assessment draft (which appeared in Theriogenology at the start of the year) that some people may not be satisfied with the amount of data used for review to have even written the document in the first place.

When then, the FDA rhetorically asks, should the decision be made that enough information has been provided? Their own answer is simple: "In practice, it depends on what questions you ask, and how the data answer that question."

For further investigation

This is, perhaps, the single idea to carry away from this series. All the information supplied summarizes just a fraction of the whole that is GMO regulations, but it is hoped that the data serve as (no pun intended) food for thought, whetting the appetite for further investigation. If it is human instinct to fear what is unknown, then perhaps instead of just questioning the safety of GM food products (and whether or not they're labeled is another matter), perhaps one should question the acceptable definition of "safe" and seek answers from reliable sources.

And consider changing the question: If the concern is that foreign matter may be entering the human body with the food consumed, is "foreign" determined by point of origin or the biochemical composition of the item itself? If GM food is off the table, then the next great food battle seems to be between eating locally and eating organically. Think of the matter this way: should one choose the imported (labeled) organic coffee or the local barako? Consider the question, and then go consider what the data will give you for an answer. "Foreign" might even mean considering the truth of the statement: "you are where you eat" instead of "you are what you eat."

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E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Why get vaccinated?

(Conclusion)

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

LAST WEEK, WE LOOKED AT the risks and benefits of certain vaccinations. We also saw that the chance of serious complications from the diseases that vaccines prevent is many times higher than the risks related to vaccines.

My former student, Dr. Julie Ann Chua-Lipayon, now part of the medical team at the clinic Immunizers, stresses the need for vaccinations not just for children, but for adults as well. She says, "By protecting ourselves, we protect the ones we love. Because we are the income providers of our families, we have the primary responsibility for taking care of our young children and elderly parents."

Flu shot

Adult immunizations include tetanus, hepatitis A and B, chickenpox, measles-mumps-rubella, typhoid, cholera and *E. coli* (traveler's diarrhea), meningococcal meningitis, pneumoccocal and, of course, the flu vaccine.

Many people think the flu is just the common cough or cold, but it is more than that. The flu is the fourth leading cause of death in our country. People at increased risk for flu complications include the very young, the elderly, those with medical conditions (heart, lung, kidney and metabolic disease) and pregnant women. Health experts recommend yearly flu vaccination for healthy persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for flu complications. Parents, midwives and caregivers who are often exposed to young children and the elderly should be protected.

According to Dr. Lipayon, the best time to get the flu shot is in March when the vaccine comes out, in order to be fully protected during the rainy months of June to September when the flu season is at its peak in the country.

What are the risks of a flu shot? A sore arm at the injection site and a mild fever. However, individuals allergic to eggs (used in making the vaccine), those who are very ill with high fever, or those who have had a severe reaction to the flu shot should not receive the vaccine.

Immunizers

Immunizers is a clinic dedicated to providing vaccination services. To increase awareness and coverage of preventing communicable diseases, Dr. Lipayon and her colleagues (Doctors Daniel Jude Lipayon, Anne Marie Lagman and Jan Denton Chua, as well as Jill Daphne Chua) established the Immunizers Clinic in Greenhills, San Juan in February 2005. Members of the medical team are formally trained to ensure proper storage, transport, and administration of vaccines. The clinic also has a software program for patient record-keeping.

Not all vaccines are needed by everyone. The doctors assist their patients in determining which vaccines are suitable for them. Factors considered include age, occupation, medical condition, and lifestyle.

Vaccinations

Aside from the clinic, the team also does home vaccinations. Dr. Lipayon says, "This is a service that is highly valued by our patients who wish to have their family vaccinations done together, those who have elderly and bedridden family members, and those who are too busy to come to the clinic."

Furthermore, group vaccination packages are also available. Dr. Lipayon continues, "There has been a increasing number of small- to large-scale companies that realize the importance of protecting their employees from disease. The cost-effectiveness of vaccination is noted because of the decrease in healthcare costs and lost productivity at work due to absences."

Immunizers has vaccinated over 4,000 patients and administered over 8,000 doses in the past two years. The clinic has been awarded Best in Vaccination Services by the National Shoppers' Choice Awards in 2005 and garnered second place in Best Vaccination Practices by the Philippine Foundation for Vaccination in 2006.

For more information about vaccines, go to the websites of the Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov), Immunization Action Coalition (www.immunize.org), the National Network for Immunization Information (www.immunization-info.org) and The Vaccine Page (www.vaccines.org).

Immunizers Clinic is located at 226 Wilson Building, Wilson St., Greenhills West, San Juan, Metro Manila, with telefax 744-5552 to 53, cell (0906) 579-6300, e-mail info@immunizers.net,and website www.immunizers.com.ph. Clinic hours are Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (from Monday to Friday) and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Saturday).

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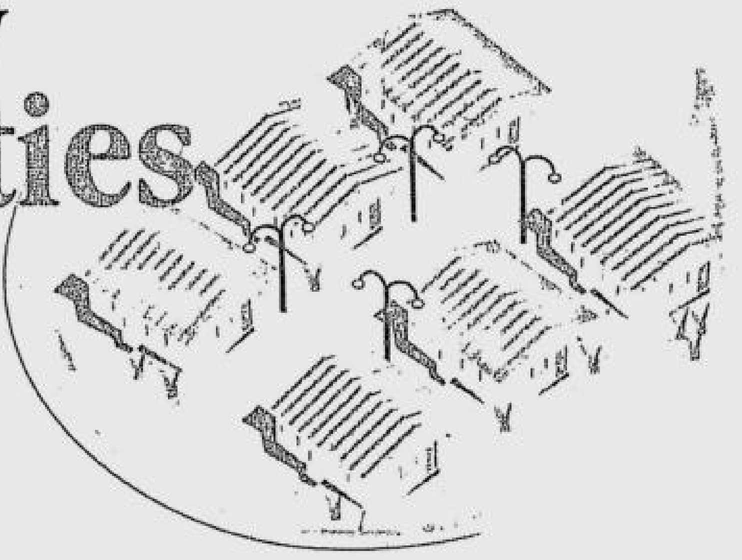
Queena N. Lee-Chua is a professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

PROPERTY

Providing stable water supply to needy residential communities



By Charles E. Buban

WATER SERVICE IS SO vital to any residential community that without such basic infrastructure, it cannot be expected to grow and prosper.

"Without water, poor communities are at a bigger disadvantage. Usually, they have to pay five times the current rates, have fewer hours of water supply and buy water from vendors," said Antonino Aquino, president of Manila Water Company Inc.

Aquino informed that just recently, three residential communities in Rizal province (aside from supplying parts of Metro Manila, the company is also in charge of servicing the cities and towns of Rizal province) became Manila Water's latest recipients of its sustainable development program called Tubig para sa Barangay (TPSB).

Started in 1998, the program has since provided safe drinking water to informal settlements, while successfully reduced water losses usually caused by unregistered connections from these areas.

3 recipients

The three recipients were Kasiglahan Village

PROVIDING/ B2-2

Brittany BE A

THE INSPIRATION IS GRAND VICTORIAN
THE L N ENTRAL C SMOPOL TAN

Photos by Bien Bautista

This is Victorianne Beautifu

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Enjoying bed and breakfast

WELCOME TO
CASA MARCOSA
ROOMS FOR RENT
NOW OPEN TO SERVE YOU

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

ONE OF MY PASSIONS IS TO travel around the country on a motor bike. In indulging this passion, I have discovered that the ride is always more enjoyable than the destination. Because of this, I think it is more sensible for me to spend more on fuel than my accommodations. However, despite the limits I set on my budget for accommodations, I am still careful about choosing my temporary lodging.

In my travels along the countryside, what is becoming more of a common sight are bed and breakfast places that have sprung up in small, unexpected spots, many of these charming and homey. Whether it is as far up north as Pagudpud or Sagada or as far down south as Sorsogon and Saranggani, this is the type of establishment I tend to look for, more than the established hotels. It allows me the ambience of a "home away from home" and the freedom from too much "check-out hassle."

Come to think of it, it's not just riders like me who have come to enjoy these small inns. Businessmen, sales representatives, as well as some tourists have long preferred the simple comfort of such establishments. With the rising cost of travel these days, there seems to be a growing demand for no-frills lodgings that boast the cleanliness and warmth of a home, without the fuss and formality of a hotel.

Basic needs

I interviewed fellow rider, Nilo Vergara, founder of Microtel Hotels in the Philippines, a six-year general manager of the Manila Polo Club, restaurant owner, and now into hospitality development consultancy, for some tips about the basic requirements for micro-hoteling. He says that anyone who has the enthusiasm and patience to entertain guests, with the primary concern of ensuring their comfort, can be a candidate for this endeavor.

Of paramount importance is a drive to maintain order and cleanliness. It is likewise a must to allocate sufficient time to running or, at least, to overseeing its actual operation. In a number of instances, these bed-and-breakfast inns are run by "empty nesters," elder parents whose children have all grown up and moved away and are left with a spacious house and lots of time. With minor refurbishing they can turn their idle property into a money-earning venture. It also helps if they know how to cook or can find someone to prepare a substantial meal.

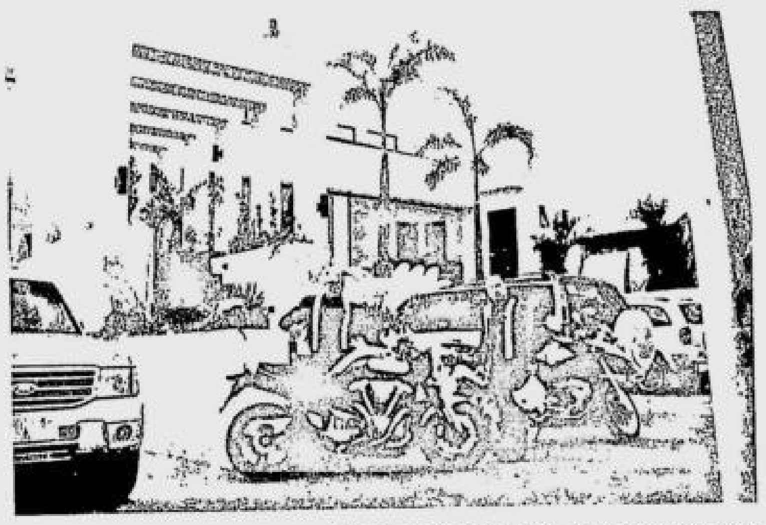
Good idea

Fellow architect, Mike Guerrero, also a bed-and-breakfast operator in Ilocos, suggests that this may even be a good idea for relatives of migrant workers who have suitable property, as long as they possess the qualities mentioned above. A good location for an inn would be in a secure and peaceful area, which is accessible to public transportation, unless, of course, one can offer reliable shuttle service. Aside from accessibility, another valuable consideration is security. It would be a great advantage to have a secure parking area, a primary concern for riders like myself.

When one speaks of comfort in lodging, you invariably begin with the bed and beddings, which, needless to say, must be clean. The rooms must give sufficient privacy; it would be ideal to have solid doors with sturdy locksets, which give the perception of security. The rooms need to have proper lighting and ventilation. Air-conditioning units may be desirable in some rooms. In addition, there should be clean working toilets. It is a plus to have water heating facilities, particularly in the cooler regions. As with any structure, public or private, there must always be viable and clearly marked fire exits.

A natural attraction in the vicinity, like a beach, mountains, or waterfall, is a great crowd-drawer, but not a necessity to the business. What really keep the customers coming are the warmth and sincerity, the friendliness and "smile" in every act of service.

You will be pleasantly surprised at the other business opportunities that can grow out of innkeeping. Affiliated services such as laundry, overnight parking, short tours, lunch and dinner catering, video rentals, massage, and souvenir shops can also be made available.



BOUTIQUE Hotel and Casa Marcosa in Tagaytay (topmost)

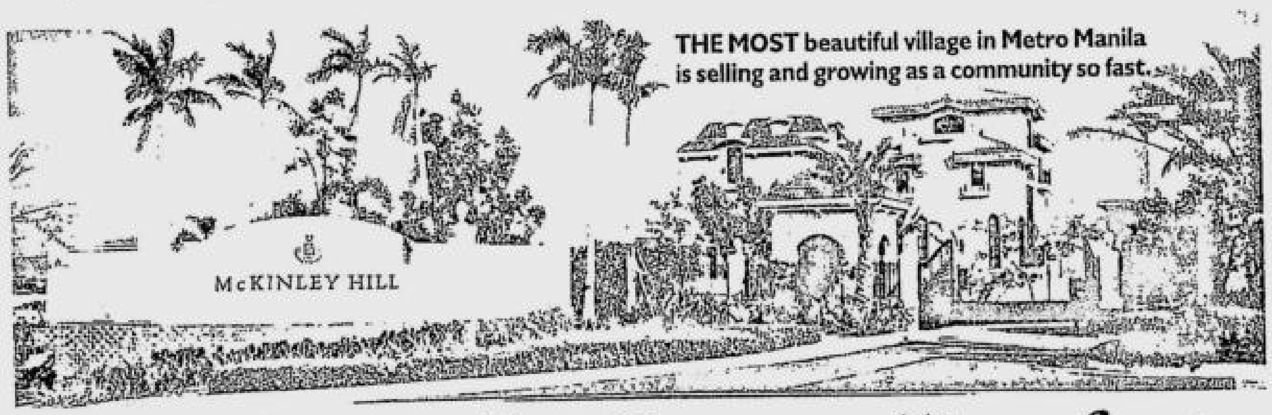
Cost not prohibitive

The cost of setting up a business such as this need not be prohibitive. It will all depend on whether you already have a building, even an old residence, and its condition, or whether you are planning to begin from scratch. You can start with a minimum of three rooms and expand as quickly or as slowly as you like.

Initially, marketing your establishment is as simple as passing out flyers and putting up posters. Eventually, if your service is any good, word of mouth will work to your benefit. In a country where gossip runs faster than a sports bike, that method should not be underestimated. The next option is through postings on the Internet.

However, the best marketing strategy is offering good service and excellent food. Forget about the usual bacon and eggs. Think regional! You will be surprised that the most common meal in your province turns out to be a quaint and memorable culinary treat for a guest.

So why not open your doors, meet new people, have fun, and do something good for your community, not to mention earn a respectable income, by embarking on this project? With the vacation season fast approaching, there couldn't be a better time to start than now.



THE MOST beautiful village in Metro Manila is selling and growing as a community so fast.

McKinley Hill Village selling fast

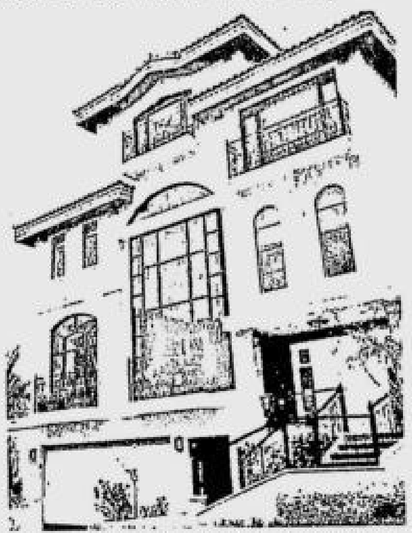
IN ONLY A MONTHS, THE HOUSES and lots of Megaworld Corp.'s new high-end subdivision, McKinley Hill Village, are selling so fast, investors and new homeowners are snapping them up like the proverbial hotcakes.

As of the first week of March, 83 percent of the 482 lots of this gently sloping hill—hence the name McKinley Hill—have been sold. This leaves investors and homeowners only 82 chances to experience the lifestyle in what Megaworld dubs as "The Most Beautiful Village in Metro Manila."

Newest township project

Considering their lofty stature, the buyers knew readily why their investment is the wisest choice they ever made. This high-end village is part of Megaworld's newest township project, the 50-hectare McKinley Hill in Fort Bonifacio. Its main artery, the Upper McKinley Road, connects it directly to McKinley Road and to Makati City's main thoroughfare, Ayala Avenue. Next door is the rising Bonifacio Global City. McKinley Hill is also bounded by C-5 to the east, thus making the Ortigas business district, the airport, and the south's beach destinations within easy reach.

Investors also warmed up to the project's proven "Live-Work-Play-Learn" formula, which Megaworld successfully introduced in the pioneering township of Eastwood City. It's all about a better quality of life. They get to live in posh homes or condominium units. They have the chance to work or do business at McKinley Hill Cyberpark, which hosts top business process outsourcing (BPO) firms. Exciting play choices are available: the lap pool and children's playground at the clubhouse and shopping and dining options at the upcoming Italian-themed mall.



THIS fully furnished Lisbon-inspired contemporary mansion is a true gem for any family.

Final 'Learn' component

Parents and those seeking to advance their careers will be delighted to know about the final "Learn" component. The Chinese International School is now being finished, ready for its August opening. The Korean International School is also slated to open soon. Currently, the world-class hospitality institution Enderun Colleges will soon operate its campus within McKinley Hill. Other top international schools, Assumption College, and the Asian Institute of Management are also minutes away.

ASPIRING homeowners can check out eight model homes and find out the one that their heart desires.

The clincher? It's likely the beauty that the homes of McKinley Village exude. In Italian, you'd call the homes an astounding "Bellissimo!" Eight wonderful Mediterranean-themed homes have charmed buyers. There's the Tuscany-inspired Plantation villa, the Paris-style Neo-classic chateau, and the Lisbon-inspired contemporary mansion—which is fully furnished in an elegant manner—to choose from.

What more can your heart desire? A beautiful home, an exciting township, and a better quality of life await you and your family. Call 815-1888 now to have a vision of the beautiful life, only at McKinley Hill Village.

Providing stable water supply . . .

From page B2-1

in the town of Rodriguez, Barangay Pagasa in Binangonan and Steel Homes Subdivision in Antipolo City, where some 50,000 people reside.

A huge portion of this P104 million project, went Kasiglahan Village, a middle-income government housing project where 6,000 homes are located.

"Since water source is a problem, the project tapped several ground water wells in Barangay Curayao and constructed a five-kilometer pipeline in order to reach the village," Binangonan Mayor Pedro Cuerpo informed.

The second part of the project involved the construction of a P14-million water system in Barangay Pag-asa to provide a 24-hour water supply to some 800 families who used to get their water supply only after midnight.

The third project went to Steel Homes Subdivision in Barangay San Luis, Antipolo City were over 160 families live.

Antipolo City Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan said the subdivision's residents will no longer have to depend on unreliable water vendors and will now have to pay only P600 a month.

Well worth the investment

"It was well worth the investment," Aquino said, adding that since a huge portion of its customer base—estimated at five million—belongs to the poorer sections of society, it was only proper for the company to set up a program that would prioritize water for these poor communities.

Manila Water is in charge of servicing the East Zone, which covers the cities of Makati, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Marikina, most parts of Quezon City, some parts of Manila and the municipalities of San Juan, Taguig and Pateros as well as cities and municipalities in the Rizal province.

"Manila Water decided to align its business plans with its sustainable development goals of social and environmental improvement. The TPSB specifically targets large number of clustered low-income communities, high rate of illegal connections, poor quality of water, and presence of roadways large enough to lay tertiary lines," he explained.

So far, the TPSB has since provided water connection to over 18,000 households or more than 109,000 people from low-income communities.

Sensible urban living at Camella's Pacific Residences

EVOLVING THE VISION OF PROVIDING value-for-money homes in masterplanned communities, one that it has turned into reality for more than 100,000 Filipino families in the last 30 years, Camella Homes & Communities, through its new unit, Camella Prestige, unveils its P1.5 billion development called Pacific Residences, a one-of-a-kind community found in one of the best locations in Metro Manila.

Influenced by the distinctive architecture of neo-Victorian San Francisco, Pacific Residences is a masterplanned collection of enclaves consisting of condominiums, single-attached homes and townhouses that are tailor-fit for different lifestyle needs, with an emphasis on friendly community values and smart city living.

Like jewels, these enclaves are set amid esthetically appealing streetscapes and complemented by amenities for residents that include a commercial area with entertainment and lifestyle facilities, inspired by San Francisco's Union Square, giving a new meaning to the term "inner-city."

Unbeatable site

Pacific Residences boasts an unbeatable site in terms of value and proximity, because it is located on Taguig Diversion Road in Taguig City just off the C-5 artery, within a 5-kilometer radius of Makati. Fort Bonifacio is a next-door neighbor, with Market! Market! a short drive away. The Ortigas business center is a mere 15-minute ride to the north with Quezon City just beyond; the South Luzon Expressway and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport are equally accessible in the other direction.

The condominium enclave of Pacific Residences has a resort-style ambiance, offering accommodations starting with compact, 1-bedroom units with 27 sq m of floor area priced at P1.2 million, to 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units with floor spaces of 55 and 80 sq m, respectively, so that each resident's need for space is properly addressed. Near the condos are to be found the meditation trail, botanical garden, yoga garden, swimming pool, clubhouse and playhouse.

Home models

The "Natalie" single-attached homes, with floor areas of 93.5 sq m and minimum lot areas of 99 sq m, are intended for growing families. Residents can interact with neighbors and raise their children in comfort and security. Each unit includes three bedrooms and three toilets and baths, a balcony and carport, a room for house help and provisions for a lanai.

The "Pamela" single-attached homes, with floor areas of 76.5 sq m and minimum lot areas of 88 sq m, are elegantly designed with eye-catching details, exuding a subtle charm reflecting the lifestyle tastes of residents. Each of these homes features a spacious living room, three bedrooms, two toilets and baths, a balcony and a carport.

The Queen Townhomes offer four models with floor areas that range from 138 to 177 sq m and lot areas from 89 to 106 sq m. By urban standards, these three-story townhomes are luxuriously spacious, with high ceilings and modern interiors. The carport is situated in the rear of each unit so that a resident may fully enjoy the picturesque, San Francisco-like street view.

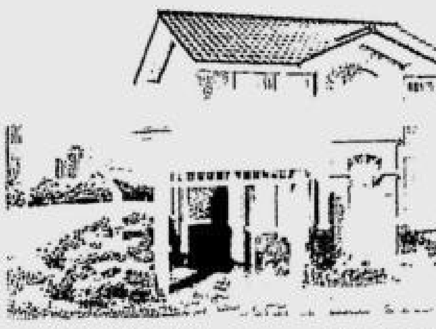
The Olivia Townhomes have two models, each with a floor areas of 67 sq m and lot areas of 72 or 98 sq m. Each unit displays the neo-Victorian influence with a stylish balcony overlooking the streetscape, and includes two bedrooms, two toilets and baths, a living room and a comfortable family area.

Affordable homes

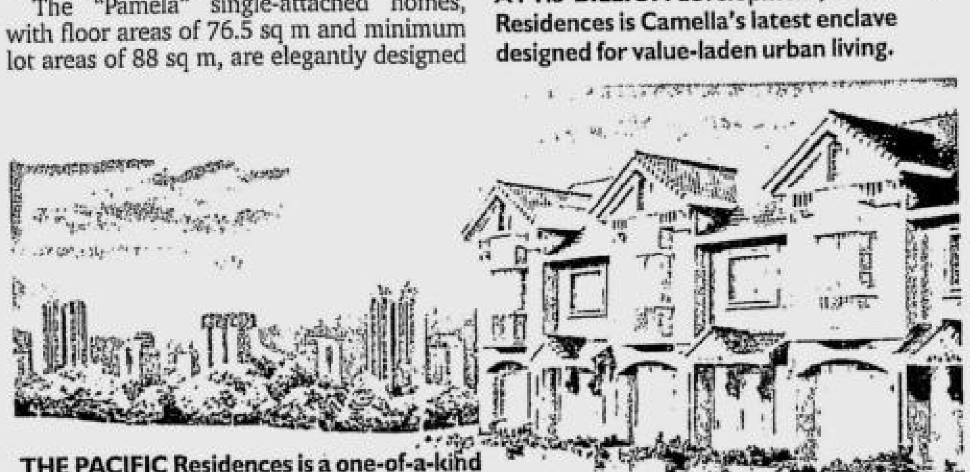
"With the launch of Pacific Residences, Camella continues to fulfill its promise of building homes that Filipinos can afford and be proud of. It's about respect for Filipinos and the dreams that they have worked so hard for," says Maribeth Tolentino, president of Camella Homes and Communities.

"Our community planning and home designs undergo a strict process of development that keeps in mind the homeowner's desire for a better quality of life, but one that is unpretentious. Our focus is on well-designed homes with close attention paid to detail, that provide comfort, privacy, security and convenience, with investment value assured in the long term," he concludes.

The preferred property brand of Filipinos for three decades, Camella Homes & Communities is the country's largest and leading provider of quality affordable homes. For more information about Camella Prestige's Pacific Residences, call telephone numbers 772-1096 or 850-4682 or visit www.camela.com.ph on the Web.



A P1.5-BILLION development, the Pacific Residences is Camella's latest enclave designed for value-laden urban living.



THE PACIFIC Residences is a one-of-a-kind "inner-city" development inspired the neo-Victorian architecture San Francisco.

Genuine freedom of low-density condominium living

IT'S A SITUATION THAT CONDOMINIUM dwellers in the city have come to contend with—crowded lobbies and hallways during peak hours of the day, swimming pool areas filled to capacity during the sweltering summer months, and parking spaces juggled between unit owners and visitors.

Some have already accepted it as a fact of condominium life, a compromise for having a home that is near the conveniences of commercial centers, offices and schools. However, discriminating condominium dwellers know that there is a development in the prime business district of Bonifacio Global City (BGC) that offers a revolutionary concept of spaciousness in condominium living with no compromises—a distinctive lifestyle proposition only from One Serendra.

Real value

One Serendra is the Ayala Land Premier development within the Serendra garden residential condominium development that offers the real value of a low-density atmosphere in a condo. Density can be defined as the ratio of number of units of a condo development over its total land area. This is an accurate measure of how comfortably spacious a development may be.

From the mere environs of One Serendra itself, spaciousness is felt in the common areas and amenities, which include an exclusive spa and underground courts, swimming pools, and gyms that will never be uncomfortably crowded. Step out of the unit and enjoy a sanctuary of greenery and landscaping that serves as a buffer to the commotion beyond the property.

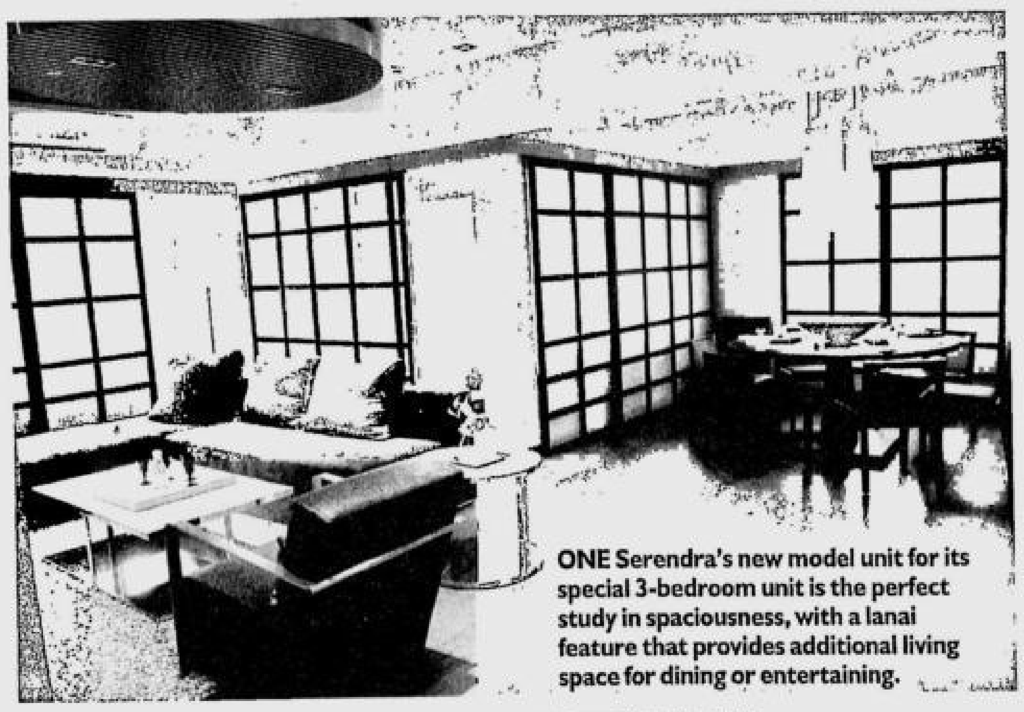
Simply put, residents find themselves sharing space or amenities with less number of people at any given time. Find a quiet spot within the gardens to read a book, while the kids kick ball a few feet away in their own area among the greenery. The result is a truly distinctive, refined atmosphere that values personal space and privacy of both its residents and guests.

Not compromised

The initial phases were deliberately developed with low- and mid-rise buildings, but even with future tower phases, the overall density of One Serendra is not compromised due to the sprawling land area it sits on—there is still more than enough space for the exclusive number of residents. Most importantly, this means that attention to the needs of each of them is assured. Property management and concierge staff will be able to efficiently tend to requests, and unit owners' guests will be treated with individual care and attention.

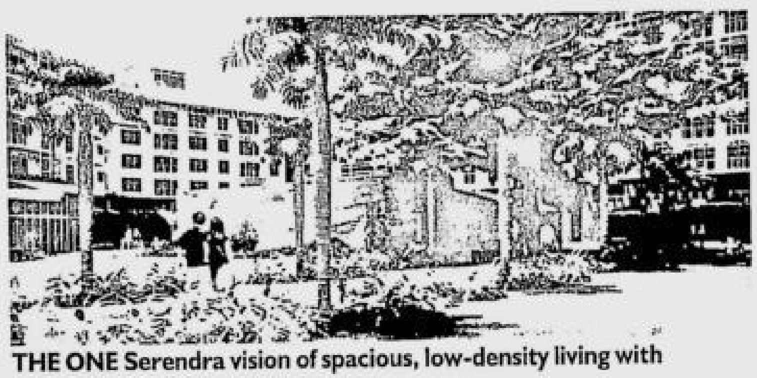
Making the choice to live in a condominium to enjoy the benefits of security, accessibility and resale or investment value without sacrificing comfort or convenience is not a hard choice to make these days with One Serendra. Live a fuller condominium lifestyle as only Ayala Land Premier can offer, alongside its reputable track record and heritage of building only the most exclusive and distinctive communities.

Learn more about the lowest-density atmosphere of One Serendra by calling its hotline, 889-1SER (1787) or inquiring online at one-serendra@ayalalandpremier.com.ph or www.oneserendra.com.



ONE Serendra's new model unit for its special 3-bedroom unit is the perfect study in spaciousness, with a lanai feature that provides additional living space for dining or entertaining.

ONLY One Serendra provides the premier condominium lifestyle in Bonifacio Global City.



THE ONE Serendra vision of spacious, low-density living with greenery is now a reality.

Live in style at Eastwood LeGrand

LIVE LIFE IN STYLE. THAT WAS probably the guiding principle in mind when Eastwood LeGrand was conceptualized by Megaworld Corp. and built in the fabulous Eastwood Palm District in Eastwood City. Towering 38 stories high above the city skyline, the beautiful residential building stands out in its unique Art Deco design, reminiscent of New York's Chrysler Building, or even the famed Empire State Building.

In all its architectural grandeur and luxury of French interiors, one would think that it is home only to the power couples or privileged families living in their one- or two-bedroom units. While that is true in many cases, Eastwood LeGrand has something to offer trendy single yuppies too, who have made Eastwood City their choice destination for fun and play. This is no other than the fine and luxurious Executive Studios.

The Executive Studio of Eastwood LeGrand typifies the poshness of the rest of the building. It comes with the whole package-the prestigious address, round-the-clock security and other top of the line facilities. From inside the studio, the wide windows offer a view of the colorful line of bars, cafés and restaurants down below, which you could choose to enjoy viewing while sitting at your home on a relaxing night, or go down to for that quick dinner date with friends, family, or even that special someone.

Modern interiors

The modern interiors speak of affluence with its laminated floorings all throughout its living, dining and sleeping den areas. Exquisite ceramic tiles line the kitchen, toilet and baths—resulting to a clean and smooth finish, characteristic of the whole theme of the residence. And to maximize the all-important studio space, modular closets are wisely infused in the sleeping den, as well as a modular undercounter and hanging cabinet installed in the kitchen.

Other than the coziness of a studio unit in a prestigious residence such as LeGrand, one attraction to the young and active Eastwood residents would be the highly accessible retail shops on Eastwood Palm Tree Avenue. Whether it is a day for splurging, or simply a regular trip for your supplies, everything is just a walk away from home, literally!

Fitness station

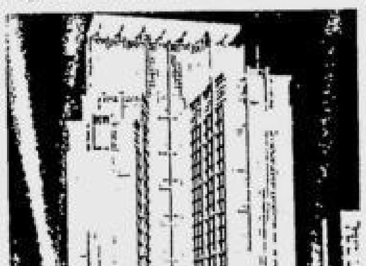
Talk about walking, for the health buff, there's a jogging and walking path connected to the very functional adult fitness station for that early morning workout. And whether you choose a quick lap or a luxurious dip, there's the swimming pool with that unique in-water pool lounge and jet spa decorated with two interesting waterspout structures. Truly a delight not only to the body, but to the eyes as well. The swimming pool also features a wading pool for the kids plus a paved sunbathing deck for that glorious sun kiss!

Residents of Eastwood City would usually talk about loving the fun and perks of having the restaurants, the theater and even the church, right within the neighborhood. Whether it's a simple leisure stroll in Citywalk 1 and 2, a day in the Cyber & Fashion Mall, or even a hard day's work in one of the hightech offices, what better way to end it than just walking back to your home for a good and comfortable sleep after the day's done. However, at Eastwood LeGrand, even something as simple and basic as living is done in a grand and luxurious way, always.

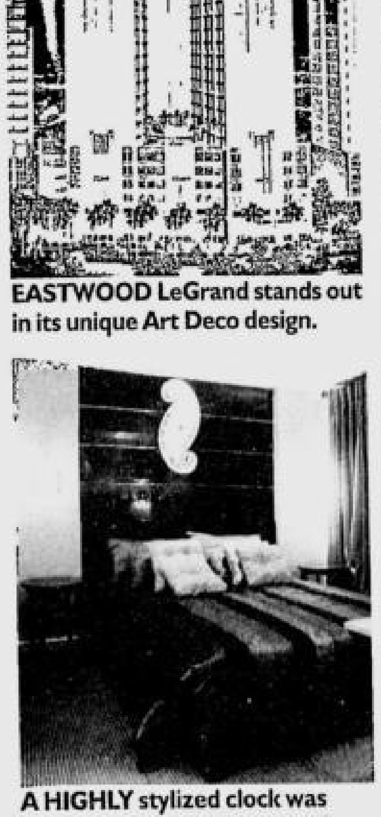
To view the very trendy executive studio unit soon, visit the Eastwood LeGrand model units at the Eastwood City Information Center on Eastwood City's posh Orchard Road or call 421-4243 and 421-4247 now for a viewing appointment.

A FLOOR lamp is both a functional and decorative piece at the contemporary-themed executive studio unit, which was designed with a modern bachelor in mind.

THE DINING area is simply splendid.



EASTWOOD LeGrand stands out in its unique Art Deco design.



A HIGHLY stylized clock was used as a design element in the bedroom to combine form and function.

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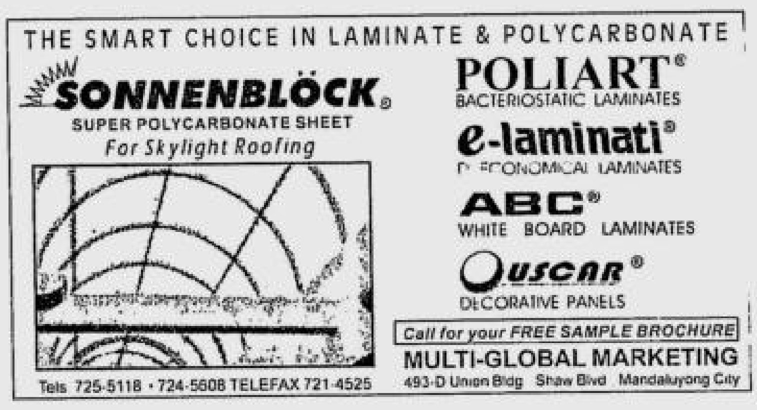

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Brittany: Changing the face of Makati CBD

A NEW TWIST TO fine living in the midst of a concrete jungle finds its way in the premiere Central Business District. With Brittany Corp.'s first foray into the highly competitive high-rise residential condominium developments in Makati, the maverick real estate developer is changing the urban landscape with an innovative approach to living in the heart of the metropolis.

The Mosaic, the first-ever designer condo in the country, marks the beginning of a P5 billion, 2-year investment of Brittany in Makati. Located at the back of the Asian Institute of Management, Mosaic gets the view of both Greenbelt and Legaspi Park as well as the Manila South side. It is close enough and only walking distance from the business hub and commercial center. Yet it is tucked in the area of Legaspi that is more private, away from the main roads and rush-hour traffic.

Unique Brittany signature

"Mosaic will have that unique Brittany signature: a fusion of creative ideas coming from the best disciplines in the industry. This 30-story high-end, high-rise condo does not only merit from its enviable location fronting Greenbelt 1, it is also the first true designer condo in the country. It is the first high-end condo that applies the concept of centricity, where units within the condominium are sensitively and sensibly planned with specific segments in mind: condo units that understand what women want, those that are designed around masculine lifestyles, and living spaces that are well suited for a family," Brittany president Jing Serrano enthused.

The Mosaic is a reflection of Brittany's flair for esthetics and eye for detail. This unique development is a condominium that is primarily residential but with an appropriate mix of commercial establishments to service the needs of its residents. Aptly called a designer condo, the units are designed with a greater degree of flexibility in mind in order to address the varied requirements of the homeowners—be it a single male, female, or a family.

Floor areas range from 34 to 104 sq m. It offers studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom units in various configurations to better address the various requirements of the diverse urban dwellers.

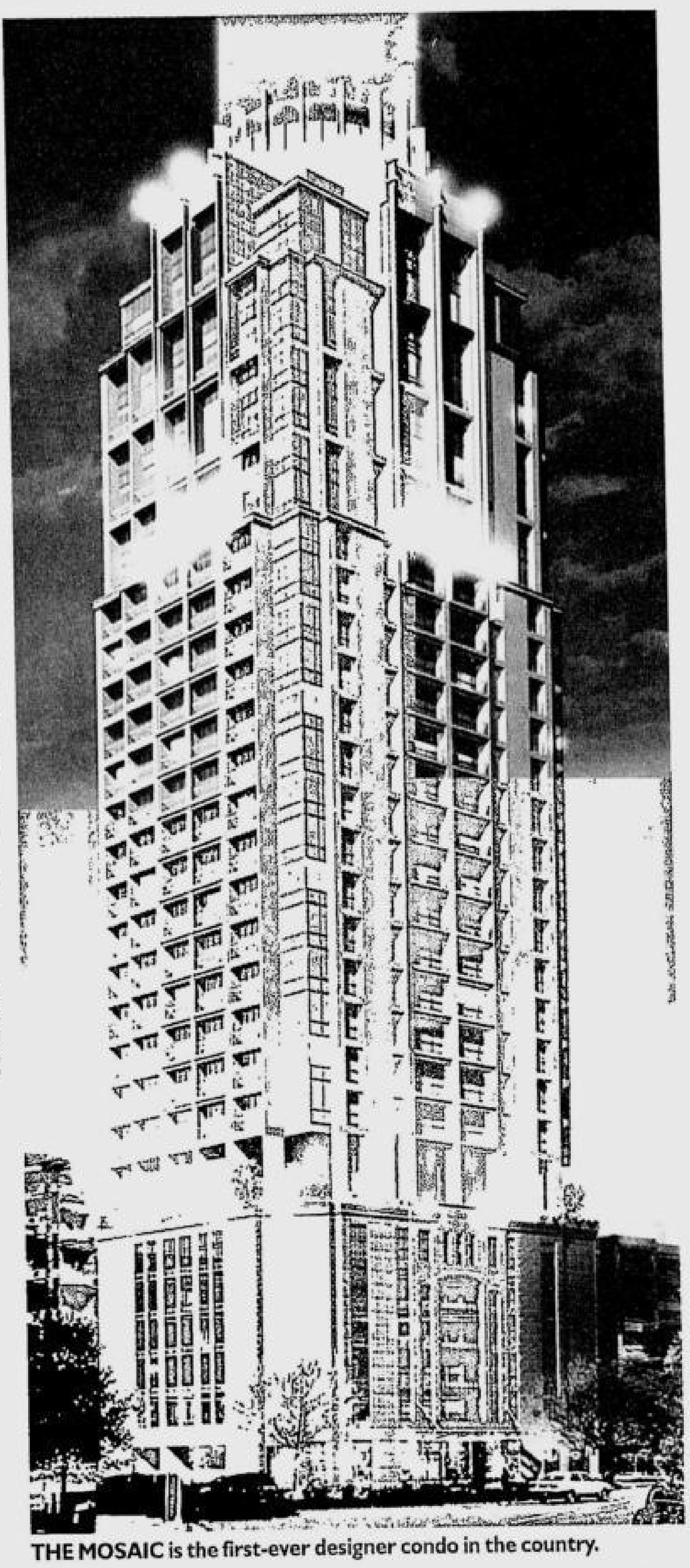
Amenities

"The 7th floor has been allotted for the amenities area where the residents can recharge after a busy day. An area at the ground level has also been earmarked for a coffee shop," Serrano added.

These amenities include valet parking, concierge services, indoor infinity pool, spa and fitness facilities, housekeeping and maintenance services, grand lobby lounge with coffee shop, cocktail bar, and covered parking levels with state-of-the-art security systems.

"Creating a landmark in Makati with Mosaic is a milestone for Brittany," Serrano said. "Not only have we poised ourselves to enter the vertical segment, we have also conditioned the company structure for growth and expansion with this bold move. This is definitely just the beginning. Brittany will be introducing more unique condo concepts within the year, not only in Makati but also in other key commercial and business districts in Manila."

For inquiries and property previews, please call 850-2868 or 850-3084.



THE MOSAIC is the first-ever designer condo in the country.

Filipino windows among Asia's best

LEADING WINDOW FASHIONS brand Hunter Douglas has recently announced that it has chosen five entries from the Philippines to be included in its prestigious list of the most beautiful windows in Asia.

These windows will be featured in a book called "Window-Shades of Luxury Living," which will be released throughout the region this year.

"We are excited to announce that five of the most exquisite windows from our country will be immortalized in a coffee table book that features the best of its kind in Asia. This is truly an honor worth celebrating," said Jet Bije, sales director of Hunter Douglas Philippines.

According to Bije, the coffee table book features selected interior designers and the projects they have done using Hunter Douglas Window Fashions' range of products. It is inspired by another coffee table book published by the company in Latin America last year.

Manila's best

Some of the interior designers and homeowners whose work are going to be featured in the Hunter Douglas book are Marcelo Alonzo, Jaya Ibrahim and Associates, Freddie and Lorna Motos, Melvin Porta, and Camilo Vasquez, Alvir and Mabel Jugo.

Alonzo incorporated Hunter Douglas' Roller shades, Silhouette window shadings and wooden blinds to create clutter-free rooms that evoke a sense of peace and privacy.

Jaya Ibrahim and Associates tapped into Hunter Douglas' rich collection of wood blinds to complement the Balinese theme that its client wanted for his home.

Hunter Douglas Florette Privacy Sheers and Silhouette Window Shadings added more drama to the high ceilings of the Motos' luxuriant residence.

Porta, on the other hand, achieved the challenging task of combining a country-style theme with a Zen interior with the help of Hunter Douglas' and Duette Ultraglide honeycomb shades while Vasquez' works accomplished a tropical-inspired environment with the use of Hunter Douglas' wooden blinds.

Meanwhile, the Jugo team used Hunter Douglas' roller shades to accentuate the high "lofty" windows of their tropical-modern house with Asian eclectic design.

The windows from Manila will share the spotlight with those from Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hongkong, Malaysia, Thailand, India, Indonesia and Vietnam.

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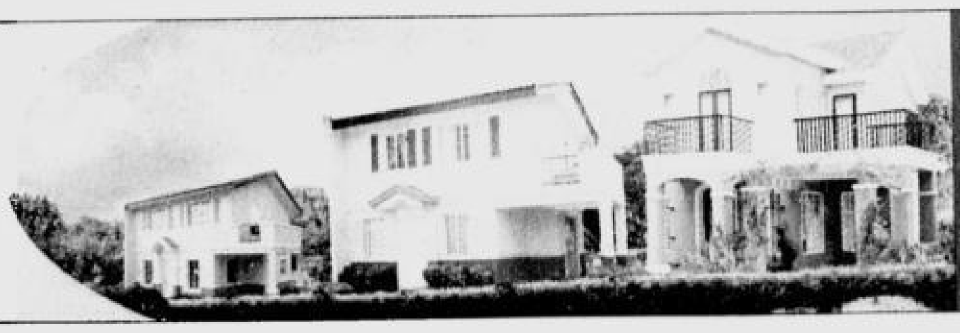

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Pushing the Belo button

Tim Yap

WHEN DRA. VICKI BELO meets people, she couldn't help but size them up. It is after all, a huge part of who she is as the nation's progenitor of cosmetic surgery and beautification.

She starts by touching your problem parts and for a second, you feel like you are just a slab of meat she wants to sculpt. You stand there for a minute not knowing how to react as she enumerates your love handles, saddle bags and crooked nose. But then you get over the initial shock when you realize all she wants to do is to make you beautiful.

And she has built an empire upon this desire, "to make the world more beautiful, one person at a time." The last line isn't just some catchy slogan meant as a marketing catchphrase to lure the vanity obsessed.

Many things have been said, words have been hurled and judgement have been passed onto this high profile doctor whose name has become ubiquitous as her billboards on Edsa. Recently, her name was dragged into the whole **Kris-James-Hope** saga. Naturally, she is not happy about it. Because it doesn't only mean having to face questions from the media about things she is not directly involved in, but it has also affected her business. Her business, after all, is self improvement, not relationship management.

"We conducted a thorough investigation when we found out about the incident and we have come to the conclusion that Hope's claims about the alleged incident were not true," said Vicki.

She even gave us one juicy tidbit. "She had several photos taken with **James Yap** at the reception of the clinic and had asked the husband of her colleague, a grahic artist, to digitally alter the background so that it would appear to be some other venue. The graphic however, declined the job."

Enough to give back

The truth is, Vicki has bigger things to think about. She has already said her piece many times over, and after 17 years in the idustry, she has so many other things to take care of as well. She is now neck-deep in raising funds for breast cancer research and treatment, is a mother to two grown children and a "crisis center" for celebritites and patients who all run to her for a beauty boost. But there really is no stopping the Belo brand. "I want to work until I have enough to be able to give back."

Needless to say, she has already done a lot. After championing the cause of women's empowerment, she now she wants to spread the gospel of beauty to men. "Good looks help in career advancement. People with good looks get ahead. Why should women have all the fun?"

She is welcoming men into her new Belo for Men in Rustans 5th floor, opening this month. Now metrosexuals, housebands and career men who flock to this side of Belo town can have their cake (shop and splurge) and eat it too—by having a facial or botox treatment on the side, perhaps?

Privacy within the corners of your favorite department store? Yes, and more. A lot of people I know have gone to the Belo clinics for treatments and lipo (among other surgeries), and not once did I hear anything coming out from Vicki's lips about any procedure. It is usually blurted out by the patients themselves out of joy at the results. "Our society can be so judgmental of people who go through surgery," shares the controversial doctor. "What's wrong about wanting to feel better about the way you look?"

Self-improvement inside out

If she treats these men the same way she's been treating me, then all the men who'll go to her will get more than just skin deep treatments. Because when she says self-improvement, she means inside and out. Vicki and I share the same passion for change—it is that constant craving to be better that motivates us.

People do not know that Dra. Vicki is a staunch advocate of exercise. In fact, she is one of those people who open up Gold's Gym in the morning where she works out with fitness trainer **Jerry Rieta**. From there, she goes onto the countless appointments, TV guestings and obligations as the country's resident ambassadress of beauty—all in a day's (and life's) work.

"There is no woman I respect more other than the mother of my children," said former husband, the rock scene icon that is **Atom Henares**.

Other men who are fans of Vicki include **Albert Martinez**, **Richard Gomez**, **John Estrada** and **Piolo Pascual**. (Point at anybody whose skin you admire and chances are, you'll find them in her clinic.)

Soon in her Belo for men clinics, she'll offer a treatment that can sculpt and define your abs after a few visits! I think I'll go to the clinic, armed with a photo of **Marc Nelson**'s abs and point to Vicki and say, "I want one of these."

And knowing her, I might just get it.

For Vicki, who does not see retirement as an option, this is just another step in her quest for a more aesthetic world.

Vicki Belo

The thing about fame is that ... it's a double-edged sword.

The thing I love most about what I do is ... I feel like an artist or sculptor.

People might be surprised to know that ... I'm actually shy.

The most important thing I've ever learned is that ... this too shall pass.

I wish when I started off I've been told to ... be careful not to trust everyone.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was that ... my so-called friends betrayed me.

And what this taught me was ... to pray for discernment.

The secret to happiness is ... to have a short memory.

My best ever outfit consisted of ... Chanel No. 5 perfume.

The soundtrack to my life would include ... All I Ask of You.

The thing that makes me most angry is ... lying and stealing.

If I was the most powerful person on earth ... I would make everyone beautiful inside and out.

The best thing about family is that ... They're my support system and cheering team!

When I'm gone, they'll probably say ... She made the world more beautiful one person at a time!

If money was no option ... I would run for President!

When I retire, I would like ... not to retire.

The world would be a much better place if ... people were less judgmental.

My hero is ... Jesus Christ.

The thing that makes my life worth living is ... my family and my loved one (you know who you are!).

My greatest hope for the future is ... that our country gets its act together to be greater

The worst thing somebody said about me was ... I FORGOT.

My favorite moments are when ... my children hug me and say that they love me.

I'm saving up for ... To have enough money to "give back."

My biggest indulgence is ... shopping.

My current state of mind is ... stressed.

If someone would play me in my biopic it would be ... Kris Aquino.

My 5 favorite words are ...love, beauty, oo, Bvlgari and happiness.

I aspire to be ... happy!

Dr. Vicki Belo's mission is clear: 'To make the world more beautiful, one person at a time.' And this time, she wants men to join the fun too

Photography: STEVE TIRONA
Assisted by: KIKO ESCORA
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Dale Carnegie Summer Youth Class

SKILLS THAT LAST A LIFETIME

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How students and parents benefits:

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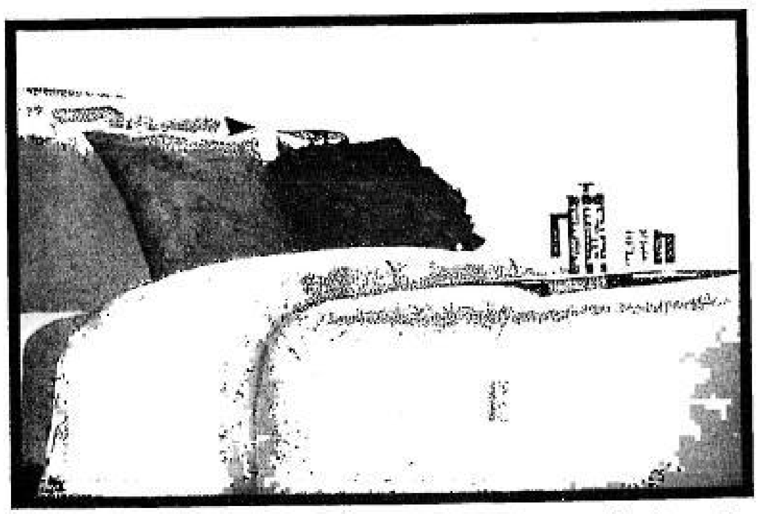
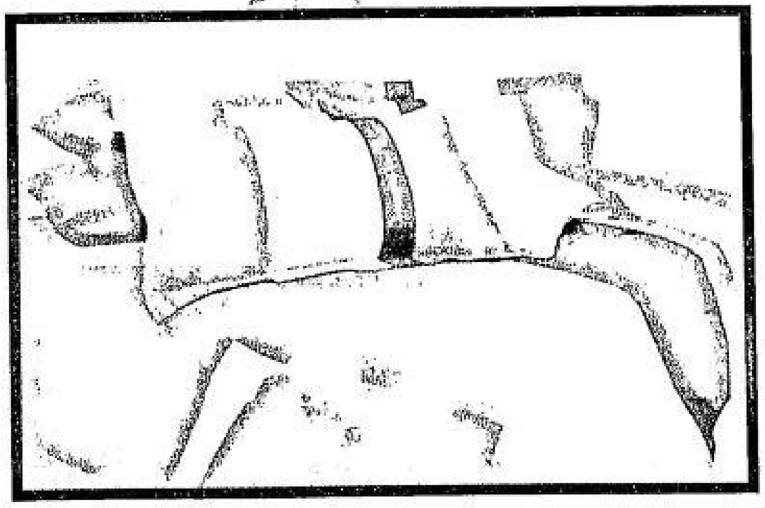
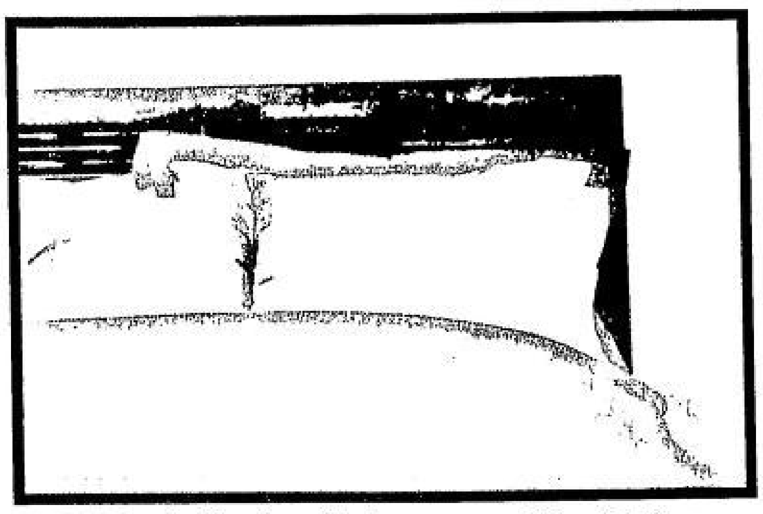


LA CROIX. Inspired by the Cross & the graphic intersection it creates



THE STRIP. Inspired by my love for shopping specifically in shopping strips such as those in L.A. and New York



MIRAGE. Inspired by mirror-like images or repetition of designs

In bed with Rajo

By Pam Pastor

I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN RAJO Laurel's magic. And I witnessed it firsthand a few years ago, while preparing for a close friend's wedding.

I was part of her entourage and because I was too busy to go to Rajo for regular fittings, my friend labeled me as "the most delinquent bridesmaid in the history of the world!" Yes, with an exclamation point.

I went to Rajo only once, to have my measurements taken, but on the day of the wedding, the gown fit perfectly.

I still have it in my closet and touch it lovingly from time to time.

But it's good to know I no longer have to reach into the back of my closet to experience Rajo's magic again.

Now I can actually lie in it.

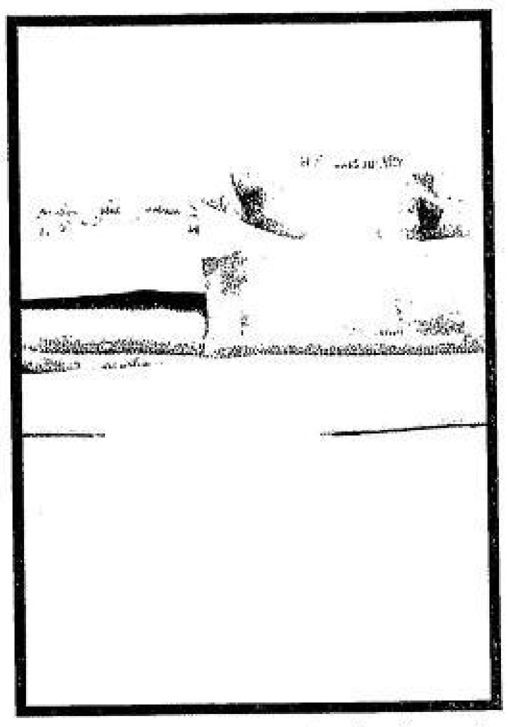
Working together with Our Home and Canadian bed linens, Rajo has released his own designer bed linens.

Canadian, which has been in the industry for 47 years now, is also the licensee for Disney, Barbie, Snoopy, NBA and WWE bed linens.

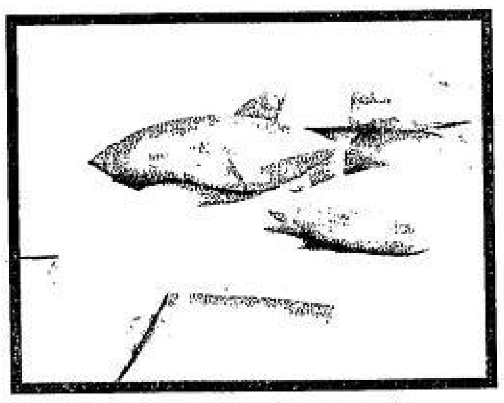
Rajo's new collection is a follow-up to the denim bed linen collection they released late last year.

"One of the managers of Our Home suggested that we launch a designer's collection. We brought that dream into reality," said Ravi Daryanani of Canadian.

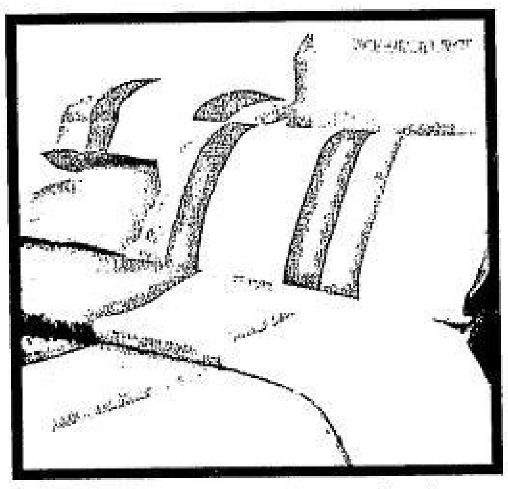
And they knew Rajo was perfect for the project. "We felt he's one of the best designers and that he'll do a very good job with color matches and detailed cuts."



EMERALD. Inspired by my favorite diamond cut, with rectangles intersecting each other.



CATWALK. Inspired by the stage where models sashay during fashion shows



AUTOBON. Inspired by the speed and long lines of German highways

After seven months of hard work, the bed linens are now ready for people to bring into their homes.

There are six designs—Autobon, The Strip, Emerald, Catwalk, Mirage and La Croix—and each design comes in four-piece (duvet cover, fitted sheet, two pillowsham) or six-piece sets (duvet cover, fitted sheet, two pillowcases, two pillowsham). Pillowcases are available separately too.

When asked how he feels about people lying on his creations, Rajo said, "It's funny, someone said that now everyone gets the chance to sleep with me."

And those who will sleep with Rajo's bed linens are in for a treat. "The fabric is very special. The thread count is three hundred and its satin finish is as soft as silk," Ravi said.

GRAPHIC COLLECTION
RAJO!

RAJO Laurel invites you to bed

Rajo will also come out with a printed collection for Canadian and Our Home later this year.

Rajo's Graphic Collection is currently available in Our Home in SM Mall of Asia and will be available in Our Home in other SM malls before the end of the month.

Ravi said, "The sets from this collection will last for years." Just like Rajo's magic.

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Unrole models

Why Hollywood girls going bad could actually be a good thing

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

AND SO IT CAME TO PASS, IN July of 2003, that Junior Hollywood's then power-brokers-to-be, who answered to the names Hilary Duff, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, et al., decided that Britney Spears trumped Christina Aguilera—but barely—in the battle of the royal belly buttons.

Vanity Fair framed that millennial teen star moment with their signature color-coordinated gatefold and time capsule-like cover story, awesomely penned by James Wolcott. The state of the under-21 pop culture nation just four years ago, at least according to the author, was something like this: "They embrace Britney because she has done a better job protecting her brand than Christina, who mucked her public image by getting all weird and nasty in her videos, as if tearing the wrong page out of Madonna's career script and taking bad advice about re-inventing herself by being 'transgressive'—a backward move."

But under the burning, candy-coated lights of kid culture, four years is a really, really long time. Since then, that quote has become mere terrestrial trivia. In much the same way, its spacey subject, Britney Spears, has turned into sluttified Disney detritus. What the F happened here?

From singing sweetheart to cautionary tale

Remember a certain perky Lolita who cooed to hit her one more time? The not-girl-not-woman who made the world out-of-its-head excited by fessing that oops, she did it again? Who even swore that she was, like, a slave 4 U? She was apparently a cute joke that lasted just long enough.

In this new-media petri dish, Brit has be-

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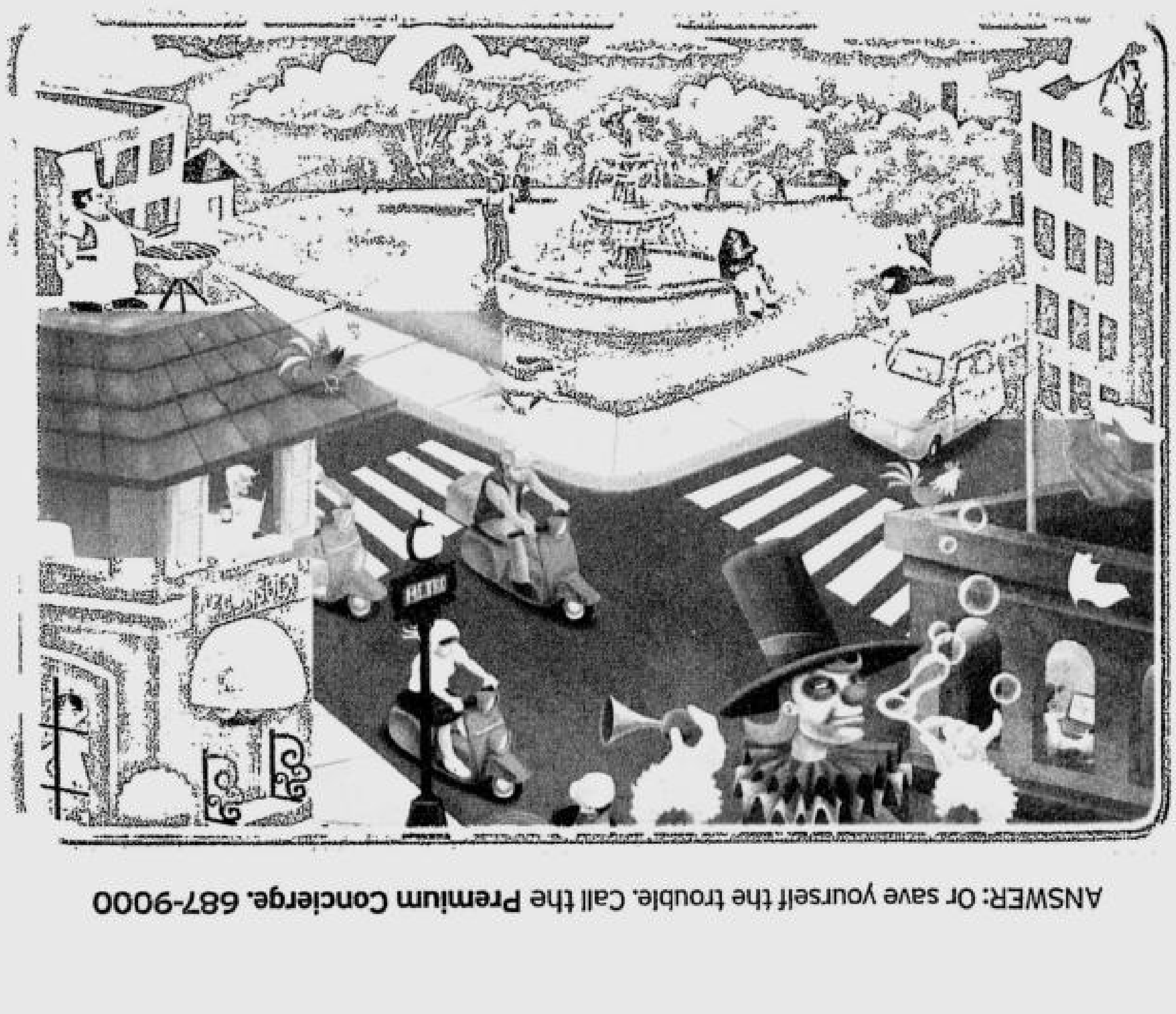

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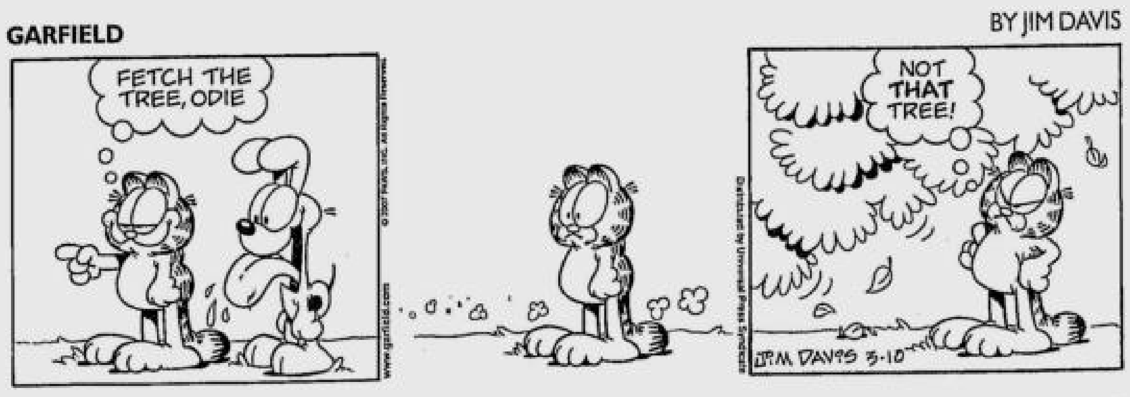
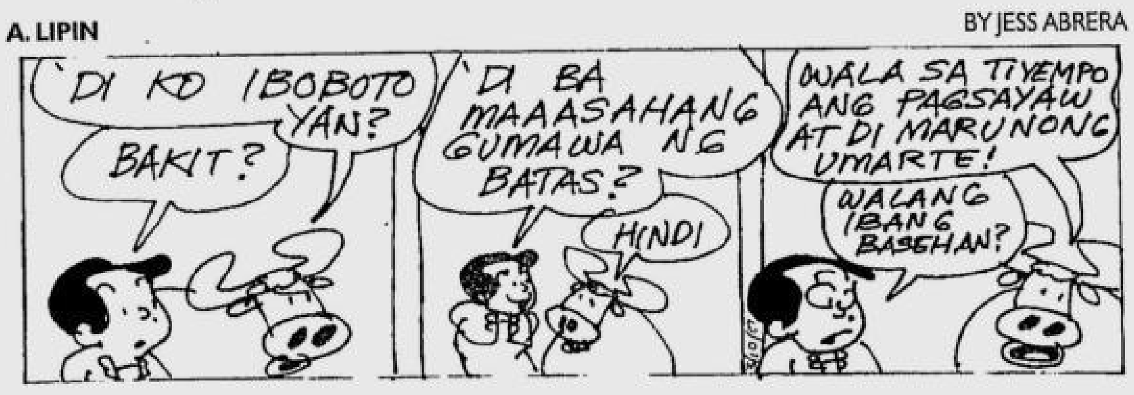
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


FETCH THE TREE, ODIE
NOT THAT TREE!
JIM DAVIS 3-10

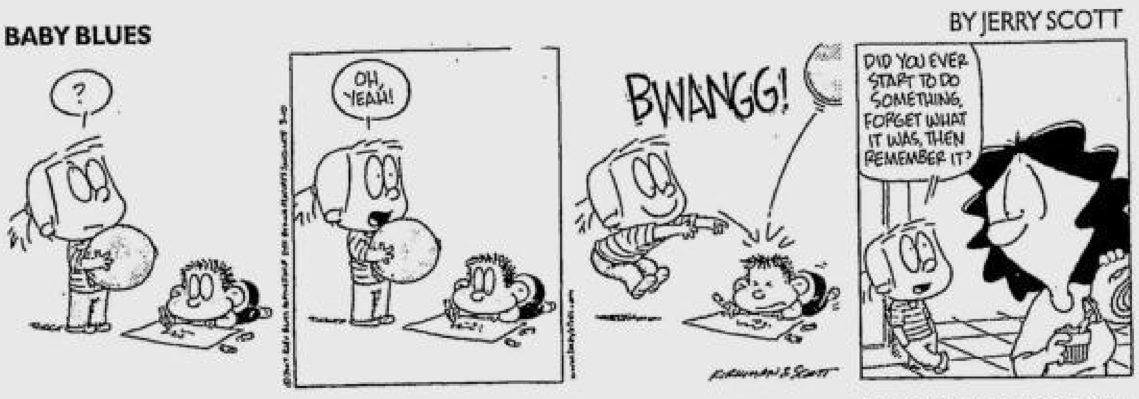
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


'DI KO IBOBOTO YAN?
BAKIT?
'DI BA MAAASAHANG GUMAWA NG BATAS?
HINDI
WALA SA TIYEMPO ANG PAGSAYAW AT DI MARUNONG UMARTE!
WALANG IBANG BASEHAN?

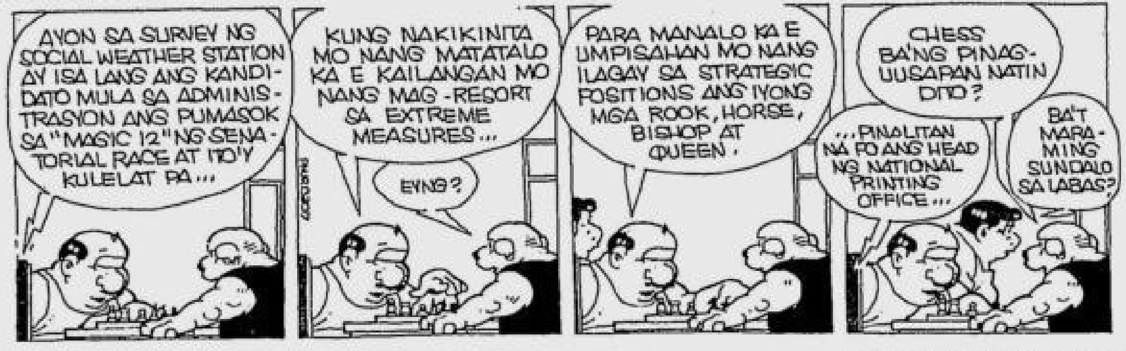
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


?
OH, YEAH!
BWANGG!
DID YOU EVER START TO DO SOMETHING, FORGET WHAT IT WAS, THEN REMEMBER IT?

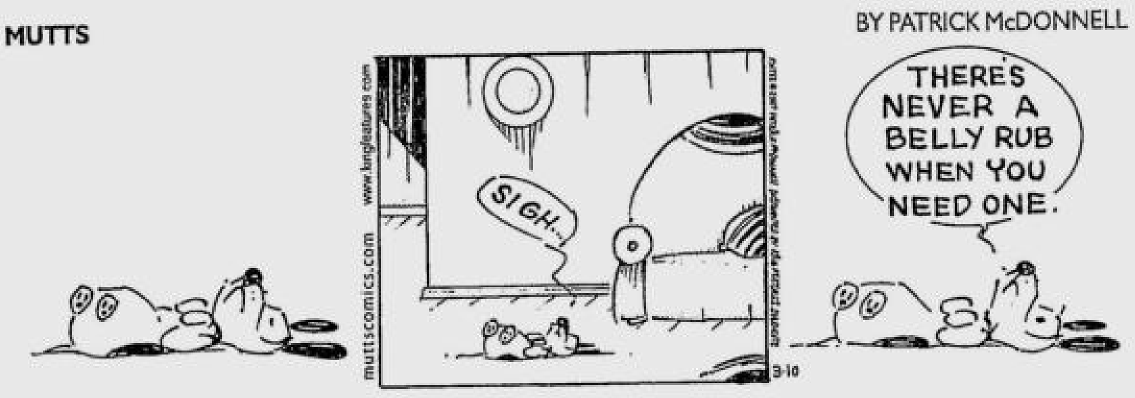
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


AYON SA SURVEY NG SOCIAL WEATHER STATION AY ISA LANG ANG KANDIDATO MULA SA ADMINISTRASYON ANG PUMASOK SA "MAGIC 12" NG SENATORIAL RACE AT ITO'Y KULELAT PA...
KUNG NAKIKINITA MO NANG MATATALO KA E KAILANGAN MO NANG MAG-RESORT SA EXTREME MEASURES...
EYNG?
PARA MANALO KA E UMPISAHAN MO NANG ILAGAY SA STRATEGIC POSITIONS ANG IYONG MGA ROOK, HORSE, BISHOP AT QUEEN.
CHESS BA'NG PINAG-UUSAPAN NATIN DITO?
...PINALITAN NA PO ANG HEAD NG NATIONAL PRINTING OFFICE...
BA'T MARAMING SUNDALO SA LABAS?

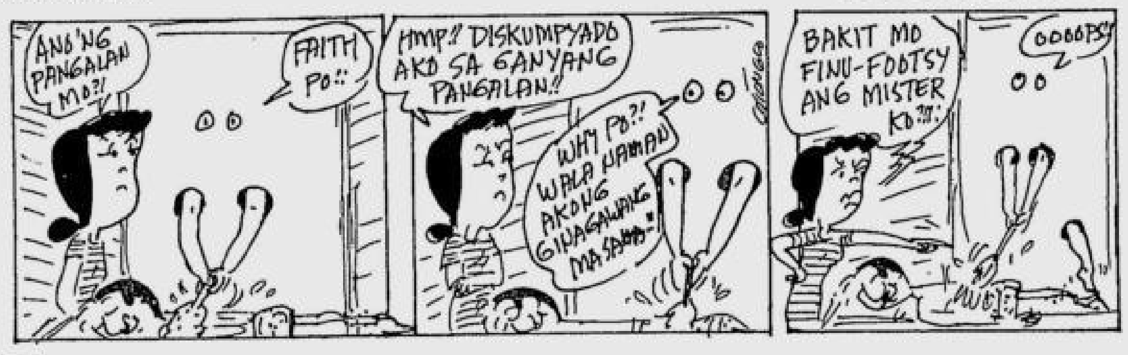
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SIGH...
THERE'S NEVER A BELLY RUB WHEN YOU NEED ONE.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
3-10

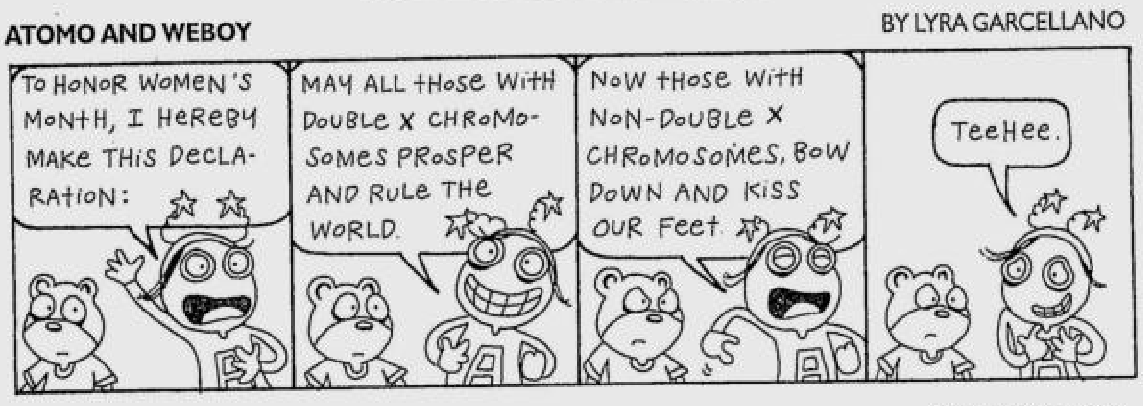
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANO'NG PANGALAN MO?!
FAITH PO!!
HMP!! DISKUMPYADO AKO SA GANYANG PANGALAN!!
WHY PO?! WALA NAMAN AKONG GINAGAWANG MASAMA!
BAKIT MO FINU-FOOTSY ANG MISTER KO?!!
OOOOPS!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

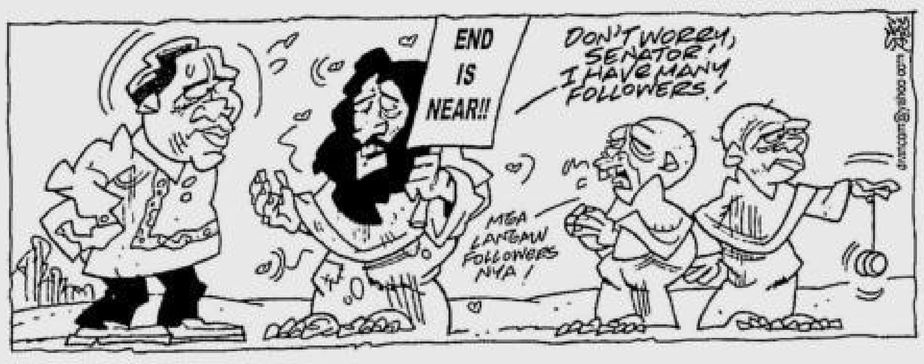
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


To HONOR WOMEN'S MONTH, I HEREBY MAKE THIS DECLARATION:
MAY ALL those With DOUBLE X CHROMOSOMES PROSPER AND RULE THE WORLD.
NOW those With NON-DOUBLE X CHROMOSOMES, BOW DOWN AND KISS OUR Feet.
TeeHee.

DIVINE COMEDY

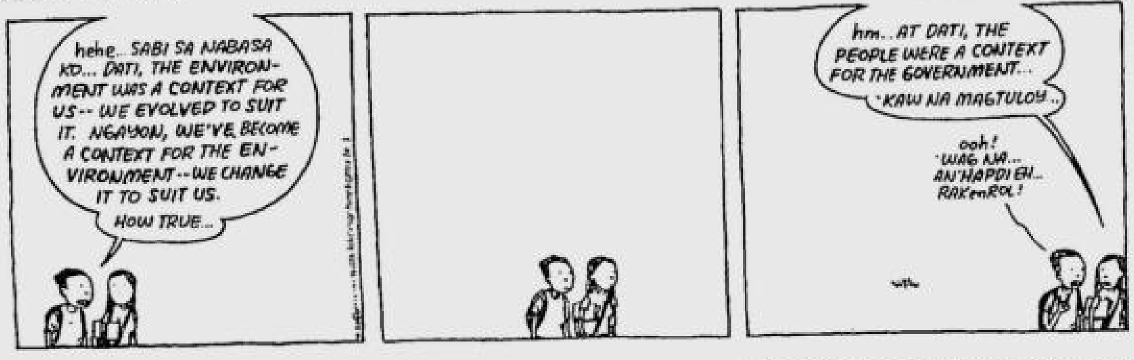
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY HUMIHINGI NG SUPORTA SA MGA RELIGIOUS LEADERS


END IS NEAR!!
DON'T WORRY, SENATOR! I HAVE MANY FOLLOWERS!
MGA LANGAW FOLLOWERS NYA!

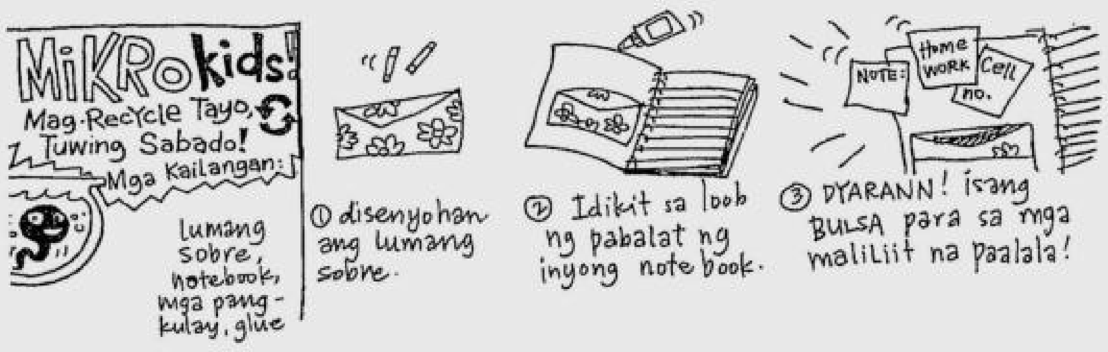
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hehe... SABI SA NABASA KO... DATI, THE ENVIRONMENT WAS A CONTEXT FOR US-- WE EVOLVED TO SUIT IT. NGAYON, WE'VE BECOME A CONTEXT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT--WE CHANGE IT TO SUIT US.
HOW TRUE...
hm.. AT DATI, THE PEOPLE WERE A CONTEXT FOR THE GOVERNMENT...
'KAW NA MAGTULOY..
ooh! 'WAG NA... AN'HAPDI EH.. RAKenROL!

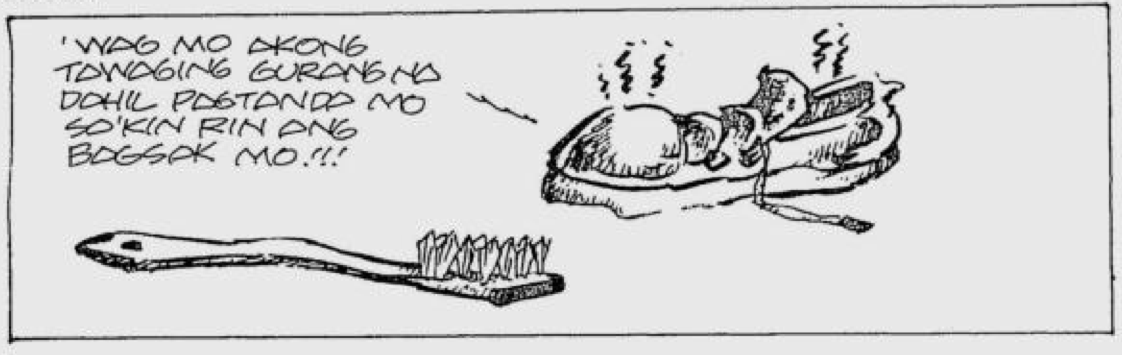
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRo kids!
Mag-Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
Mga Kailangan:
lumang sobre, notebook, mga pangkulay, glue
① disenyohan ang lumang sobre.
② Idikit sa loob ng pabalat ng inyong notebook.
③ DYARANN! isang BULSA para sa mga maliliit na paalala!
NOTE:
Home WORK
Cell no.

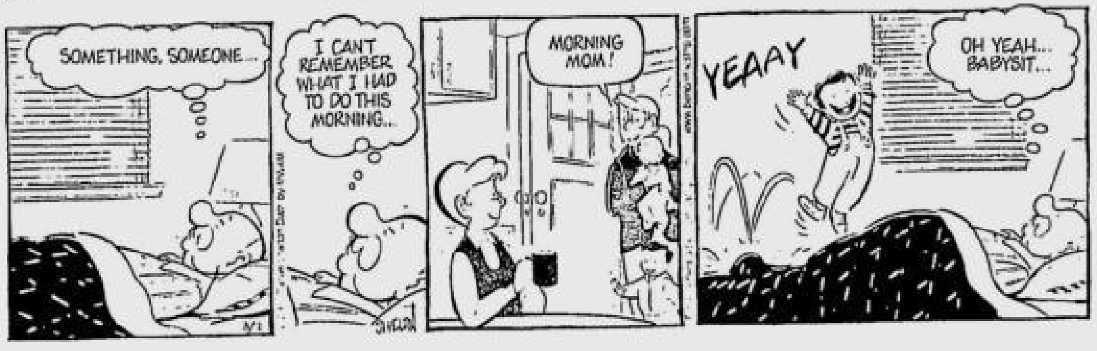
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

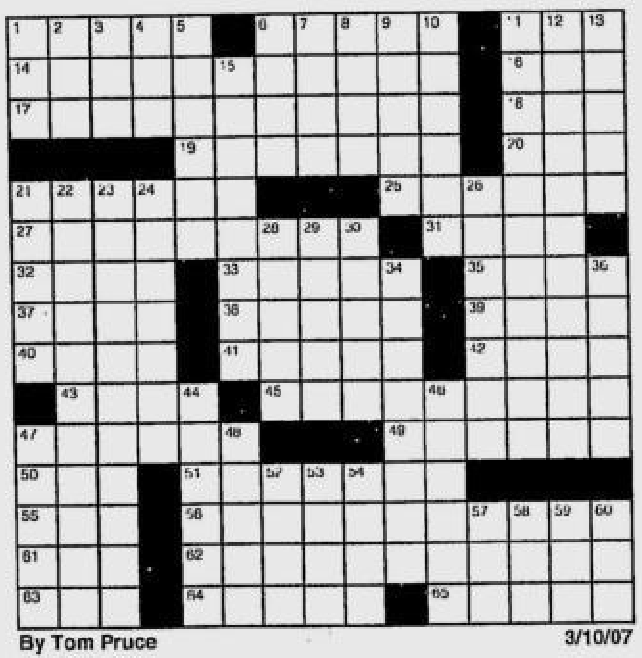

'WAG MO AKONG TAWAGING GURANG NA DOHIL PASTANDA MO SO'KIN RIN ANG BAGSAK MO.!!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SOMETHING, SOMEONE...
I CANT REMEMBER WHAT I HAD TO DO THIS MORNING...
MORNING MOM!
YEAAY
OH YEAH... BABYSIT...

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

3/10/07

ACROSS
1 Forum garb
6 Put to shame
11 Dad
14 Teen years
16 Bonzo or Clyde
17 Changes the color scheme
18 Track circuit
19 Nickel or gold
20 Layer
21 Home of the Norse gods
25 British Conservatives
27 Northern constellation, Coma ___
31 Fish catchers
32 Purim month
33 Psychologist Havelock
35 Go up against
37 Veracruz abode
38 "The Cloister and the Hearth" writer
39 University of Utah team
40 Part of VMI
41 Satisfied fully
42 Metal canisters
43 Guevara and others
45 Dwelling
47 Spirits
49 Gnatlike flies
50 "The Raven" poet's initials
51 Eight-note ranges
55 Puppy bite
56 Adam's legacy?
61 Uno e due
62 Gorbachev's reforms
63 Bygone map abbr.
64 Sorenstam or Garbo
65 Comic Amsterdam

DOWN
1 Veteran seafarer
2 Lyric verse
3 Supernatural being
4 Alternative to lager
5 Discriminate
6 Plot of farm land
7 Stream of moonlight
8 Pot entrance fee
9 Perfume allure
10 Charlton of "Ben Hur"
11 Beating with excessive rapidity
12 Milky luster
13 Noted diarist Samuel
15 Ground troops
21 Chinese calculators
22 Palanquin's kin
23 Locust
24 Exposes to oxygen
26 Disproved
28 Brighten up
29 Please mightily
30 Opposing teams
34 Delta deposit
36 Serpentine turns
44 Condescends
46 Demilitarize
47 Fellas
48 Spiral pin
52 Spare in the trunk
53 Long in the tooth
54 Clamping device
57 Old card game
58 Superior salutation?
59 ETO leader
60 No vote

Friday's Puzzle Solved

N	E	E	D	S		S	E	E	T	O		J	O	Y
A	V	A	I	L		U	L	T	R	A		I	R	A
S	I	S	S	Y	S	P	A	C	E	K		N	E	W
A	L	E	C		T	E	N		K	L	A	X	O	N
			I	S	A	R		A	K	A	N			
	P	A	P	P	Y	B	O	Y	I	N	G	T	O	N
S	A	D	L	Y			W	E	E	D		A	R	E
L	U	R	E		T	R	E	S	S		W	E	B	B
A	L	E		S	E	E	N			F	A	B	I	O
M	A	M	A	C	A	S	S	E	L	L	I	O	T	
			W	I	L	T		C	O	O	T			
C	H	E	E	S	E		S	T	L		A	S	T	A
L	I	Z		S	O	N	N	Y	L	I	S	T	O	N
O	R	R		O	N	E	U	P		D	E	A	L	T
Y	E	A		R	I	D	G	E		A	C	R	E	S

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3/10/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're empathetic, magnetic and extremely sensitive. Others are drawn to you as if by magic. You're easily hurt, but this quality makes you very compassionate to others. You value your inner development more than external goals. Work hard to build or construct something important to you this year. Your rewards will follow very soon!

Birthdate of: Carrie Underwood, singer; Sharon Stone, actress; Chuck Norris, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel a strong sense of well-being toward others today. Practice the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're willing to put the needs of others before your own today. This is noble and admirable. (In the long run, you benefit the most from cultivating this attitude.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel warm and connected to a friend today. You feel you share something special in common with each other. You will definitely help this person if you can.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Others might want your artistic or creative input into something today. Somehow you will enhance the appearance of something because of what you know or what you can do.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Travel for pleasure beckons! Since your appreciation of beauty is aroused, give yourself a chance to enjoy art, parks or beautiful places.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're willing to be generous to someone today if this person needs your help. Possibly, someone is generous to you today. Good vibes are in the air.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today you feel a strong sensitivity to the needs of others, especially close friends and partners. You might even feel a sense of "soul union" with someone. (Heady stuff.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Co-workers are helpful today. You'll enjoy doing any kind of creative, artistic work. You want people to get along. You want harmony in your surroundings.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Try to expose yourself to art, music, poetry or any kind of creative expression that inspires you. This might also include sports. You're in the mood to appreciate something that is beautiful and well done

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Do whatever you can to make your home look more attractive today. You might also want to help out a family member or someone who lives with you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your creative imagination is aroused! Don't worry if you're in a dreamy fog for part of the day. Some part of your mind is cooking up ideas on the back burner.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're tempted to buy something extravagant and luxurious today. You feel you have to have it. Others will use this same impulse to be charitable to someone. (Curious comparison.)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

7		8						1
				3	6			
			4					5
	3		2		1	5		
	1			5			9	
		9	7		3		6	
2					4			
			9	1				
3						7		9

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/10

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	3	7	6	9	8	4	2	1
9	4	1	2	7	5	3	8	6
6	8	2	1	3	4	5	7	9
1	7	3	5	6	2	8	9	4
4	9	8	7	1	3	2	6	5
2	6	5	8	4	9	1	3	7
7	2	6	4	8	1	9	5	3
8	1	9	3	5	7	6	4	2
3	5	4	9	2	6	7	1	8

Difficulty Level ★★★★

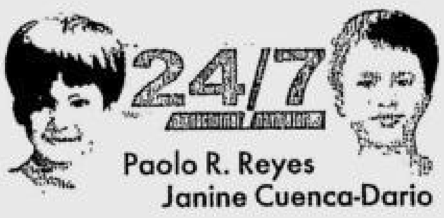
The Fresh Prince of Reggae

IT CAME AS NO SURPRISE WHEN the late reggae legend Bob Marley nicknamed his eldest son "Ziggy," a Jamaican slang for a short joint. Sporting classic Rastafarian dreadlocks and a voice eerily reminiscent of his famous father, Ziggy Marley is widely considered to be the new torch bearer of the Marley family flame.

For two decades, he was the driving force behind The Melody Makers, a triple Grammy-winning act which included his three siblings. But in 2003, Ziggy decided to venture out on his own. Since then, he has released Dragonfly (a collaborative album with his friends from Incubus and Red Hot Chili Peppers) and produced soundtracks for "50 First Dates" and "A Shark's Tale," where he also lent his voice to the character of Bernie, a Jamaican jellyfish.

Last year, Marley launched another successful album, Love is My Religion, which bagged him the Best Reggae Album award at the 49th Annual Grammy Awards. Containing a steady serving of classic roots reggae, peppered with ragamuffin, hip-hop, and shimmying carnival of African percussion, it revealed his tightly rolled talents as a singer-songwriter.

On March 24, MTV Philippines rolls out the season's hottest outdoor concert, "Reggae Fest by the Bay," at the breezy poolside area of Sofitel Philippine Plaza [CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., Pasay; phone: 551-5555]. Ziggy Marley will be at the helm of a reggae-tinged roster of artists, including Peacepipe, Milagros Dancehall Collective, Coffeebreak Island, Spy, Indio I, Reggae Mistress, Junior Kilat, and Tropical Depression. For tickets, call 891-9999.



Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

More Super! 24/7 events:

Mar. 10, Saturday

Blow by Blow Saturday feat. DJs David Jacob & Anton Ramos at Warehouse135, Yakal St., Makati; Cambio, Chillitees, Itchyworms, Truefaith, and Chicosci at Saguijo; DJs Karl Ty & Marie Garcia at Fiamma; Rouge at M Café ; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Smeared at Mag:net Café Katipunan; DJ Scratchmark at Prince of Jaipur

Mar. 11, Sunday

Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Greenbelt; Jazz Sunday Brunch at M Café ; Champagne Buffet Lunch at Paseo Uno

Mar. 12, Monday

Girl Band Night w/ Death by Tampon, Wake Up Your Seatmate, and Nicty Nasty at Mag:net Café Katipunan; Happy Mondays hosted by Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; Arrest Gloria at Conspiracy; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati

Mar. 13, Tuesday

Up Dharma Down at Mag:net Café Katipunan; The Bloomfields at Strumm's; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; Rubberpool, Ciudad, and Mayonnaise at Saguijo

Mar. 14, Wednesday

Manifesto Night feat. Trip M & Nyko Maca at Saguijo; 80s Night at Fiamma; The Bloomfields at Eastwood City; DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati

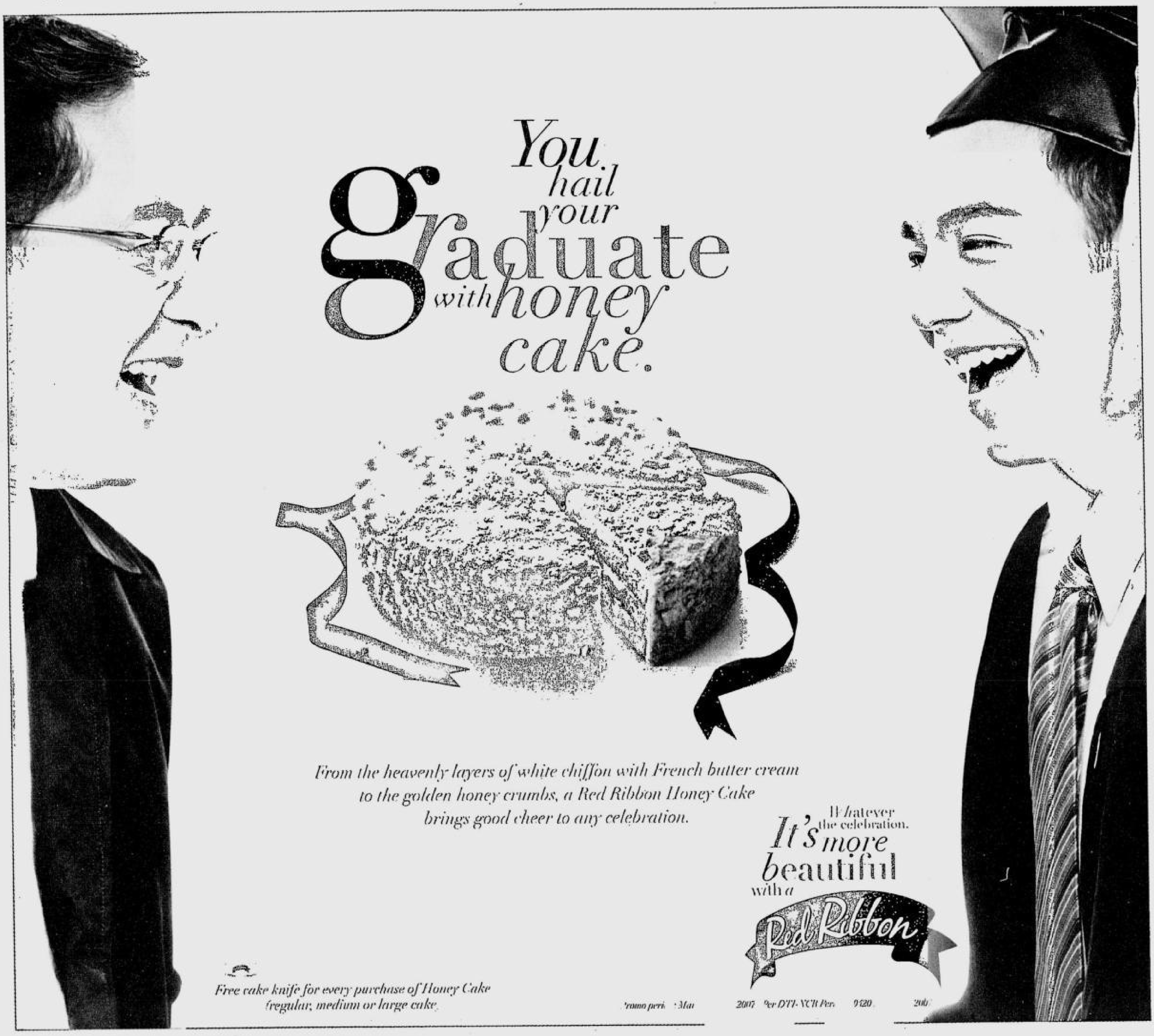
Mar. 15, Thursday

Radioactive Sago Project, Swissy, The Haneps, Sino Sikat?, Pop Your Cherry, Plane Divides the Sky, Collie Dread, Maryzark, and Peace Pipe at Saguijo; Lush w/ Steve Mills at Fiamma; Paolo Santos at Conspiracy; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Reggae Mistress at Café Havana Greenbelt

Mar. 16, Friday

House Sessions at Fiamma; DJ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; MyHOUSE w/ DJ Elian at M Café; DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Darrel & McDash at Temple; The Jerks at 70s Bistro

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more info, text 24/7 GIGS to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com, mag24_7@yahoo.com, and NocturnalNavigator@gmail.com.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Unrole models

From page D1

come a gum-smacking cautionary tale, one that's as tacky as a Juicy Couture terrycloth tracksuit. With a one-day marriage, a slimy ball-and-chain called K-Fed, several fuzzy cameos at rehab, and a bizarre head-shaving episode tucked under her 25-year-old belt, she has ruined what some say could've been the comeback of her career.

Pantyless party girls

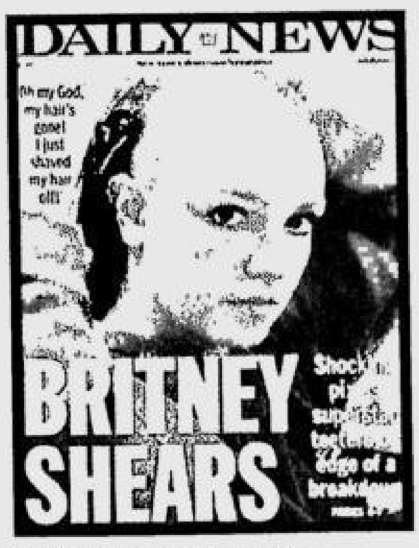
While possibly staring into the ice-cold eyes of Divorce #2, Miss Spears also heads what the blogosphere—the new tabloid—has heralded as the Brit Pack. And it's kinda not helping her rep.

A posse of pantyless party girls, the Brit Pack is loosely composed of racy, BFFing Hollyweirdos: supposed heiress Paris Hilton and once-cute Lindsay Lohan. Together, the three advertising avatars, whose bad-chick antics fuel the entire paparazzi industry, dominate gossip-hungry America. (A recent Newsweek poll established that 77 percent of Americans think that Brit, Paris, and Linds wield too much influence on young girls.) And as this country happens to dominate the world, it's pretty scary. (You are all welcome to vomit in your mouths any minute now.)

Paris Hilton, for one, has showed her take on chastity in the night-vision opus, "One Night in Paris." (With fire in her eyes and a schlong in her mouth, she really put the "ass" in "class.") That sex video catapulted her to B-List icon status, even inspiring a string of Paris Hilton episodes—like one where she competes in a "whore off" and in another where she tries to seduce Butters—on "South Park." Funny stuff.

Lindsay Lohan isn't far behind either. In fact, she always looks like she's about to pop out of a bachelor cake or dance on a pole. Stints at rehab and feuds with frenemies aside, it's her pantyless partying ways that have earned her the nick "fire crotch." And to paraphrase her and her attempt at writing, that tag is rather "adequite."

OH MY GAUDY. Parisite Hilton, spamming us with her annoying omnipresence.



SHE'S NOT CRAZY, SHE'S JUST A LITTLE UNWELL. The bald leader of the Brit Pack really wants your attention.

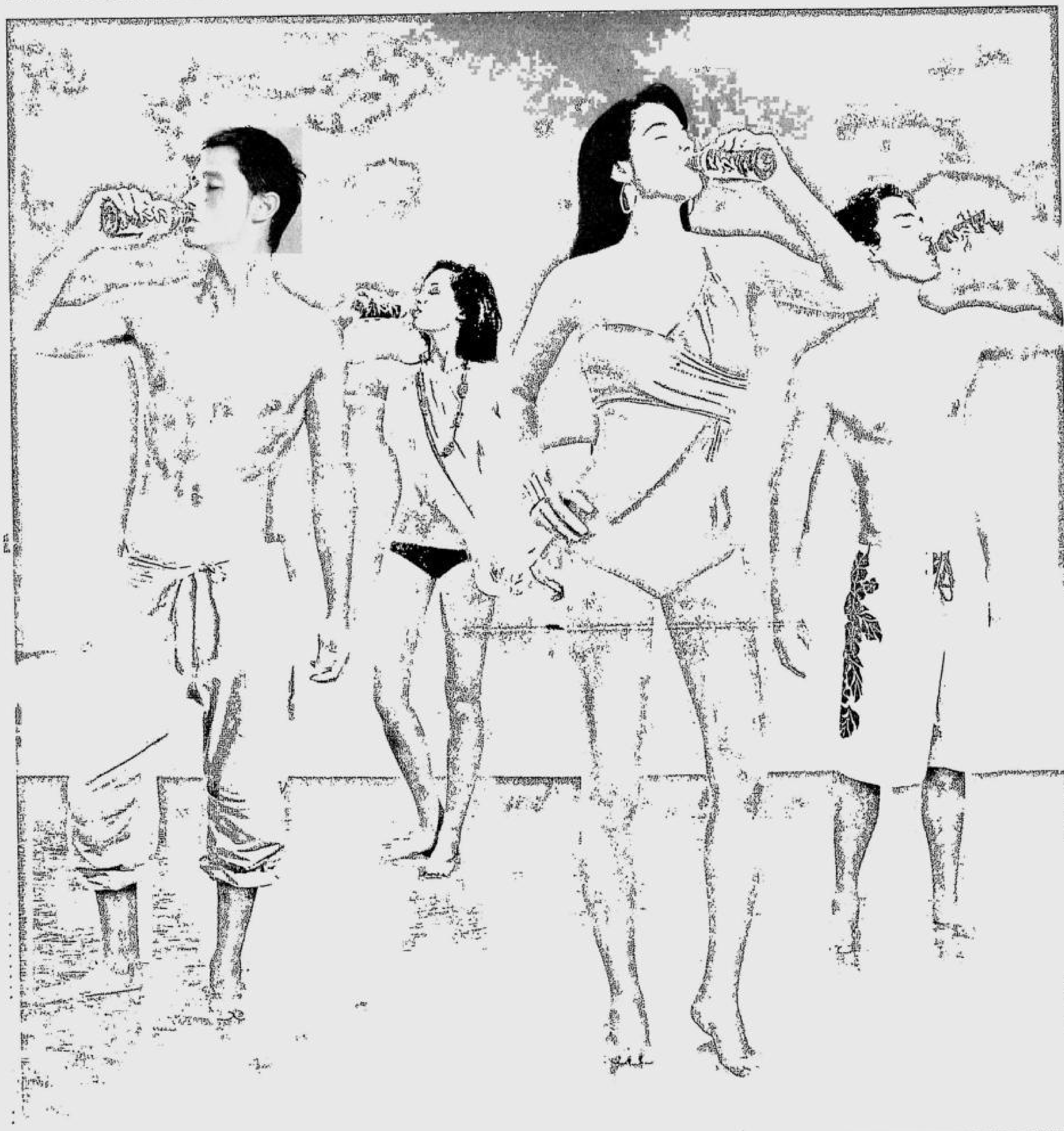
RETOX, NOT DETOX. It's "LiLo Fully Loaded!"

Girls gone wilder

Are these Girls Gone Wilder really that bad? Well, it's both a yes and a no. Let me elucidate mildly.

In last month's Newsweek, Kathleen Deveny and Raina Kelley wrote that the rise of the bad girl may signal the coarsening of culture and a devaluation of sex, love, and lasting commitment. "Like never before, our kids are being bombarded by images of oversexed, underdressed celebrities who can't seem to step out of a car without displaying their well-waxed private parts to photographers," goes the article, "Girls Gone Bad."

On the other hand—and this is where it becomes a resounding probably—some suppose that the Brit Pack effect on our generation is a bit more subtle but no less damaging. Back to Deveny and Kelley. "Rather than instantly inspiring kids to rush and have sex, out-of-control celebs create a sense of normalcy about behavior-drinking, smoking, casual sex—that is dangerous for teens. Britney, Paris and Lindsay have no shortage of 'boyfriends' but seem to have few real relationships."



Embracing the adversaries

Admittedly, it's way easier to blame Britney and Co. for all the evils in the world, including global warming and the situation in Darfur, than it is to see the whole thing as a warped moral. Perception may be reality these days, but youngsters are now more streetsmart and mature than ever before because of all the crappy drama around them.

The same Newsweek piece noticed a change in the way kiddos have embraced these alleged deviants. "As they get arrested for driving drunk and feuding with their former BFFs, the Brit Pack makes it easy for young women like Emma Boyce, a 17-year-old junior and accomplished equestrian, to feel superior to them."

Boyce was even quoted as saying that she and her friends look at Britney, Paris, and Lindsay and have a good laugh. Their normal lives, after all, seem "pretty good by comparison."

Getting on that high horse

So it appears that hooker-like girls like those (and model-banger-type boys like Brody Jenner, Brandon Davis, Colin Farrell, and, sigh, Kevin Federline) all have a purpose in the cultural wilderness of 2007. They—and anyone who has ever dared to misbehave in public: I'm talking to you, too, Mel Gibson—make us feel better about ourselves because we are not extraordinarily desperate, vulgar, weak, and lacking in attention unlike them.

Personally, I'm sick and tired of bad behavior. A little once-in-a-while mischief is fun, even okay. But chronic delinquency is boring and annoying. It's so last generation.

In a world where everyone seems to talk a little louder and peeps in the limelight act a bit more irresponsibly, I think it's perfectly all right to get on that high horse and look down on those glittery troubled ones. Kathleen Deveny ended her commentary with this insight: "That means these celebrities gone wild and all their tabloid antics can be teachable moments."

See, while unrole models like those wait for their good sense to kick in, those of us watching on the fringes can definitely pick up a thing or two—or as many as it takes—on how not to behave. Totally.

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Poker party

IF YOU'VE BEEN TELLING EVERYONE that you can beat your favorite celebrities at poker, this is your chance to prove it.

Magnavision will be holding a special Casino Royale Grand Poker Night at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila on March 15 from 6 p.m. to 12 midnight. If you are 21 years old or older and you want to be invited, all you have to do is buy Casino Royale's 2-disc DVD version and fill out the registration form found inside the package and send it to the Magnavision office (28 Manga Road, Aurora Boulevard, Cubao, Quezon City), fax it to 7267941 or 7270399 or scan and e-mail it to magnav2@magnavision.com.ph. Address it to Ms Jennifer Chua. Eighty customers will then be pre-drawn and will be given a seat for the Grand Poker Night. Each pre-drawn customer can bring one guest. There will be 10 players per table until only 10 players with the most number of chips remain. Magnavision has a lot of prizes in store for the poker players. The first place winner will receive a Sony Home Theater, 15,000 worth of non-cashable chips and a weekend stay in Regency Suites. The second place winner will receive a Sony Ericsson K800i mobile phone, 10,000 of non-cashable chips and a weekend stay in a Regency Club Deluxe Room. The third place winner will receive a Sony Cyber-shot S-500 digital camera, P5,000 worth of non-cashable chips and a weekend stay in a Regency Club Room.

There is also a Casino Royale raffle promo for other Casino Royale fans who will not make it to poker night.

IN THIS ISSUE
TWO FILMS BOOST viewers' 'Happiness' factor /E3

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'Letters' leaves indelible, elegiac imprint

By Noelani Torre

NOTWITHSTANDING its subject matter (one of WWII's bloodiest battles) and its length (2 hours and 21 minutes), "Letters from Iwo Jima" is more an intimate film than an epic.

Unlike your archetypal Hollywood war movie, it focuses on the individuals involved in the conflict rather than on the conflict itself. What's even more unusual—and unprecedented—is that these individuals are what have been historically known as the "enemy."

Point of view

Directed by Clint Eastwood from a script by Iris Yamashita and Paul Haggis, "Letters" looks at the 1945 Battle of Iwo Jima from the point of view of the Japanese.

An earlier-released Eastwood film, "Flags of Our Fathers," tells the story from the American perspective. Taken together, these two movies give us a clear and unsentimental picture of the realities of war.

Though "Flags" is a compelling movie in its own right, "Letters" leaves a more indelible imprint.

EASTWOOD AND WATANABE. Their movie paints an unsentimental picture of the realities of war.

This is partly due to the uniqueness of its viewpoint—we have gotten used to viewing the Japanese soldiers during World War II as monstrous creatures, and as alien forces that had to be vanquished.

Though the latter does not ignore the atrocities committed by the Japanese—there is a brief scene in which an officer educates his men on the significance of a medic's red cross and exhorts his men to target them—it does not dwell on them.

What is shown here is the humanity of the soldiers; the fact that they also had dreams, fears, and families awaiting their safe return.

The movie centers on several individuals. There's Lt. General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, whose idea it was to turn the island into a stronghold of bunkers and tunnels.

Played with intelligence and dignity by Ken Watanabe, the general is an officer and a gentleman in the truest sense. He once served as an envoy to the US and has a great admiration for Americans (it sounds like a war movie cliché, but it's true). Nonetheless, he plans to kill as many of them as he can—and he intends to die trying!

Then, there's Saigo (J-pop star Kazunary Ninomiya), a former baker who's doing his duty, but has no desire to commit suicide for his emperor and country (because suicide is what it was—of the estimated 20,000 Japanese troops on Iwo Jima, only 1,083 survived).

Olympic equestrian

There's also the colorful Baron Nishi (Tsuyoshi Ihara), an Olympic equestrian who once counted Hollywood stars as his friends; Shimizu (Ryo Kase), a former *kempeitai* who got kicked out because he couldn't shoot a dog; and Lieutenant Ito (Shidou Nakamura), who would rather die than be defeated.

They know, even before the bombs fall and the bullets fly, that the Imperial Army will be defeated, and that there won't be any support from air or land. They have no food and water. The only thing they get is a radio message from home, thanking them for giving up their lives for their country.

A number of soldiers would rather blow themselves up with grenades than surrender—a practice deeply rooted in Japan's centuries-old *samurai* tradition.

Despite all the violence, however, "Letters from Iwo Jima" doesn't come off as a violent movie. The tone remains elegiac all throughout, with a washed-out color palette, and an impressive attention to detail that gives it a moving, poetic feel.

This is not, after all, a movie about the glories of war—but about the senselessness of it all!

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Hollywood's golden oldies return to action

ROCKY BALBOA, JOHN MCCLANE and now, Indiana Jones: Hollywood is going back to the future by resurrecting several much-loved characters despite the advancing years of the actors who made them legends.

A 60-year-old Sylvester Stallone clambered into the ring again recently for the latest movie in the "Rocky" franchise, while a 51-year-old Bruce Willis is getting ready to reprise McClane in the fourth "Die-Hard" film this summer.

Meanwhile, in June, Harrison Ford will blow the cobwebs off his fedora and bullwhip to begin filming the fourth installment of the "Indiana Jones" movies—one month short of his 65th birthday *and* 26 years after "Raiders of the Lost Ark" was released.

Series

"I don't know if the pants still fit, but I know the hat will," quipped Ford as plans for the film were revealed.

Not content with bringing Rocky back to movie screens, another Stallone character—gung-ho Vietnam vet, John Rambo—is coming out of hibernation, 19 years after the third film in the series.

Although industry reports have indicated that the latest Indiana Jones film will acknowledge Ford's age—"Indiana Jones and the Ravages of Time" is one ironic working title—some movie pundits are skeptical about the trend of reviving characters who have been inactive for so long.

"Hollywood producers have become lazy, and aging actors have shown a lack of consciousness about themselves to an extraordinary point," Lew Harris, editorial director of Movies.com, told AFP. "There's a definite problem with Harrison Ford, who has shown in the past few years that's he's not *really* aware of how old he is.

STALLONE. "Rocky" and "Rambo" come out of hibernation.

Young sidekick

"What they're going to have to do is give him a young sidekick—like Keanu Reeves. The fact that they waited so long, I don't know who cares anymore."

Following the James Bond strategy of trying to relaunch famous characters with younger actors won't work, because so much time has elapsed since the last movies were released, Harris noted.

"It's not Indiana Jones without Harrison Ford, like Rocky isn't Rocky without Stallone," he said. Arnold Schwarzenegger decided to call time on his career as an action hero to pursue a career in politics after the last "Terminator" movie in 2003, when he was 56.

"Schwarzenegger had no choice—nobody was seeing his movies anymore! By the time he went into politics, he was dead as an actor," Harris explained.

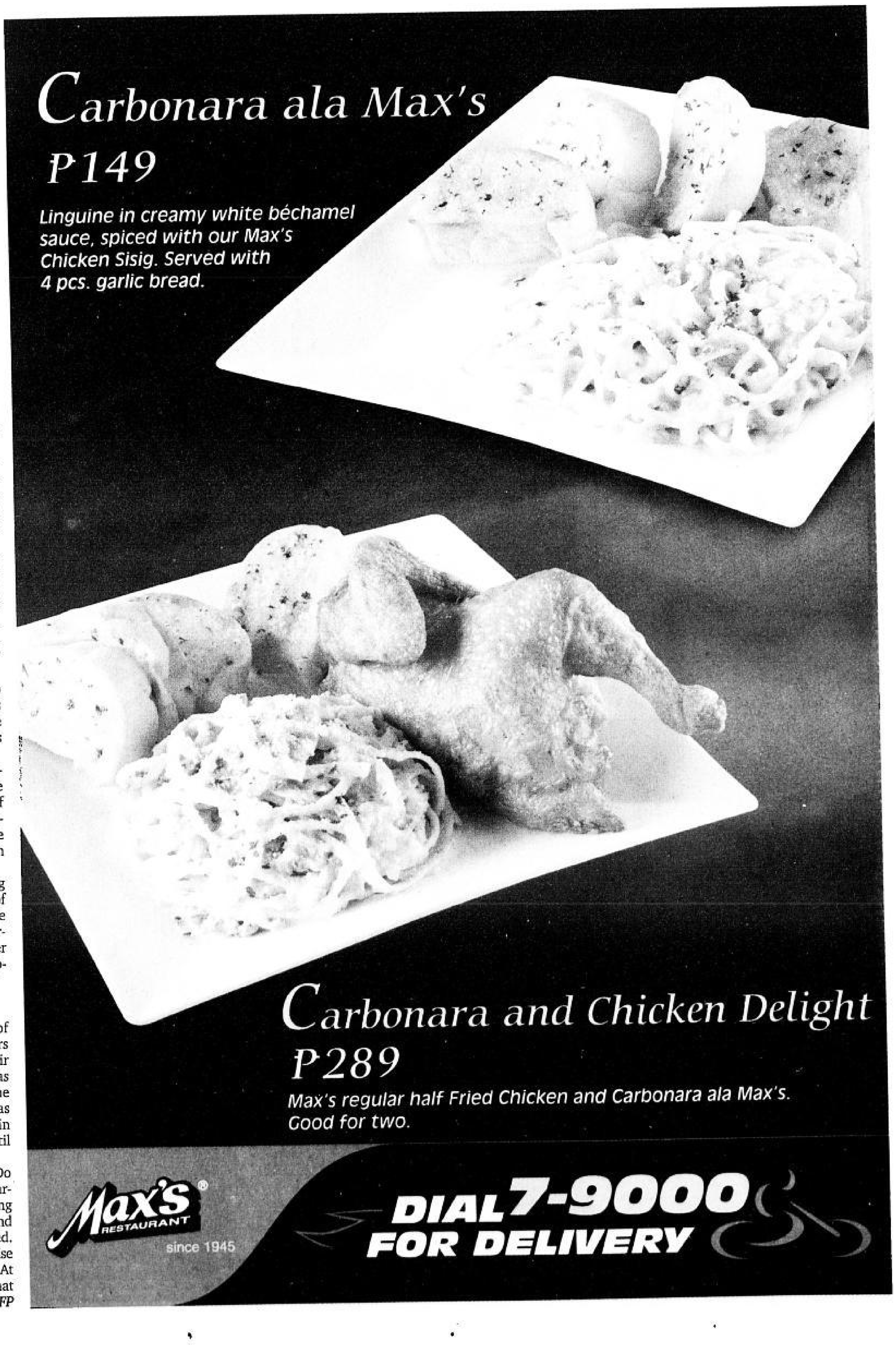
But, according to UCLA professor Howard Suber, author of "The Power of Film," the recent crop of revived movie franchises is nothing new. In fact, it says more about the battle of the sexes than the passage of time.

"There's nothing different going on now," Suber said. "It's a truism of the industry, women have trouble working past their 30s—and certainly past their 40s. On the other hand, Cary Grant was playing romantic leads into his 50s and 60s."

History

Suber added: "The history of Hollywood is full of male actors who continue to work into their 60s. What are now regarded as some of the best John Wayne films were made when he was sixtysomething. Men can play in action-adventure films—until their arthritis begins to show!"

But, Harris is not so sure. "Do you really want to see a 55-year-old guy dodging bullets, shooting people, jumping into cars, and avoiding explosions?," he asked. "Do you want to see Tom Cruise doing 'Mission: Impossible 15'? At some point, something like that just becomes silly!" *AFP*



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'Batad' filmmaker gets ready for his moment of truth

By Rica Arevalo

BEFORE FIRST-TIME director Benji Garcia megged his feature film debut, he worked in an ad agency.

He finished a degree in Communication Arts at the Ateneo, then took a course at the London International Film School.

Apprentice

In the late 1970s, he began his career in the movies as an apprentice to art director Mel Chionglo, who was then working on Eddie Romero's "Aguila."

Benji recalls, "Later, Mel was kind enough to invite me to be his art director in Regal Films' "Anak" (with Dina Bonnevie). He paid me from his own salary as director, because the production's budget didn't have an item for me." Because film work was unstable at the time, Benji joined an ad agency.

Because of Cinemalaya, Benji decided to take a crack at filmmaking again, *via* "Batad."

"Batad" won the Special Jury Prize, best screenplay (Vic Acedillo Jr.), best actor (Alchris Galura), and best production design (Aped Santos and Noel Navarro), at last year's Cinemalaya.

What are his expectations on March 14, when the film opens in SM digital theaters nationwide? He answers: "I hope many Filipinos will watch the movie—because we made it for them!"

GALURA. Won as best actor at last year's Cinemalaya film festival.

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R-13

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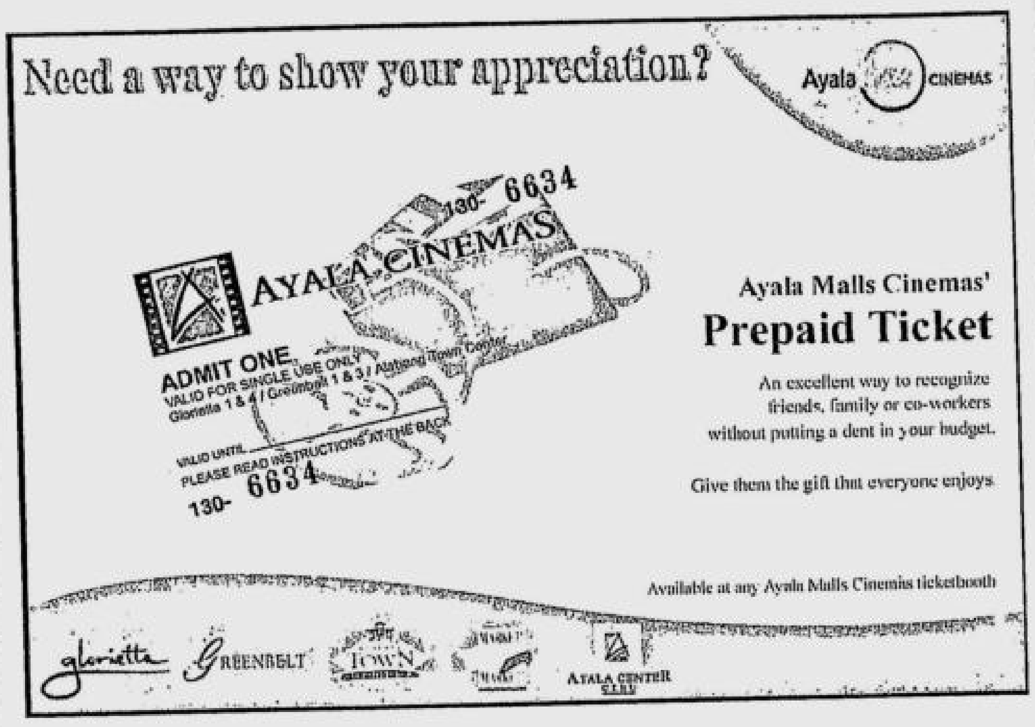

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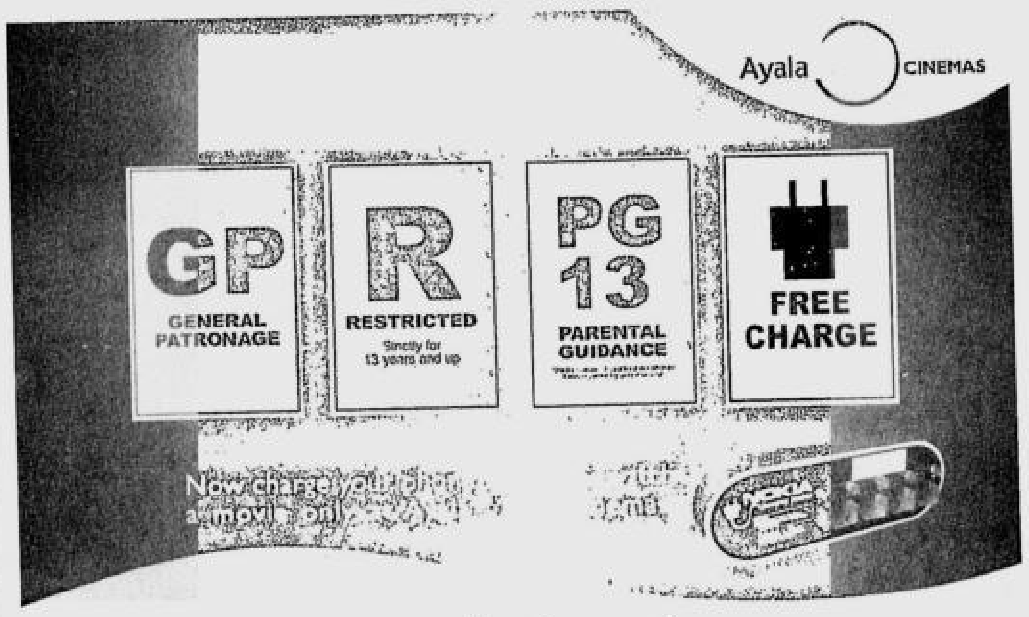

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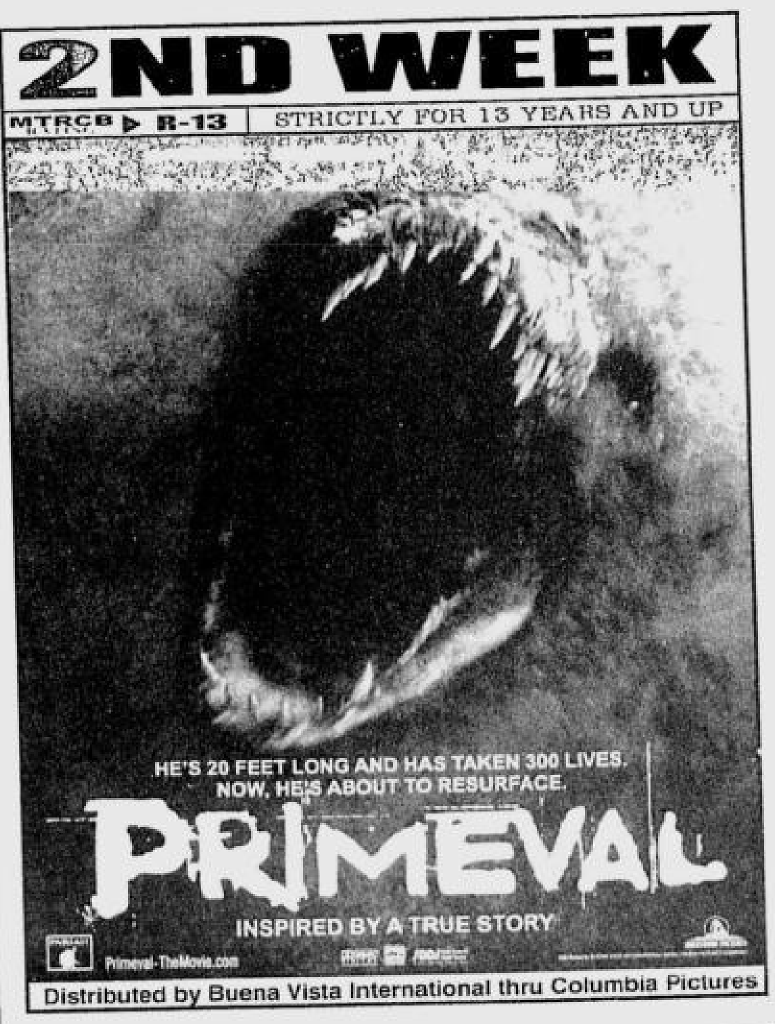

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Two films boost viewers' 'Happiness' factor

By Nestor U. Torre

IT'S QUITE AN INTERESTING COINCIDENCE to have two films with "happiness" in their titles showing at the same time! Even more interestingly on point of contrast, one of them is foreign, and the other is a local production.

The Hollywood drama, "The Pursuit of Happyness," topbills Will Smith and his son, Jaden. The Filipino production, a smaller digital movie titled "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?," stars singer-comedian Andy Bais.

BAIS (LEFT FOREGROUND). His comedy-musical-drama sustains the momentum of digital indies.

Lead player

Andy's friends are kidding him about "competing" against Will Smith, but of course there's no one-on-one competition. Smith is by far the more popular lead player—which is not to say that Andy is a complete shut-out:

His film was a hit during the Cinemalaya festival at the CCP last year, and screenings had to be added to accommodate sell-out crowds.

They were attracted to the movie because it was an inspiring comedy-musical-drama about how one man (Bais' character) can affect the lives of many other people in a positive way, even as he contends with his own problems.

THE SMITHS. Father and son deliver exceptional performances.

The film was more upbeat than most of the Cinemalaya features, hence the special favor it found among festival viewers.

This time around, however, it's playing in SM's digital theaters, so it's appealing to the country's mainstream audience rather than a festival crowd. Will it prove to be as accessible to this larger market?

For its part, Will Smith's "Happyness" starrer gives his character a really hard time, so viewers feel for him and suffer along with him in a major way.

Inspiring

It's also inspiring in its own tougher way, and shows Smith in an entirely new thespic light. He does without most of his entertaining shticks of yore, and plays his much-put-upon character utterly for real, with no frills at all.

But, the movie's biggest surprise is pulled off by Smith's son, Jaden, who plays his character's child in the film. Scores of other child talents auditioned for the plum juvenile role, but Jaden proved to be the best of the talented lot, so he clinched the part.

Make no mistake, however: nepotism had nothing to do with the decision, as Jaden's exceptional performance shows.

What makes his portrayal so outstanding is its absolute naturalness and lack of artifice. Jaden doesn't "act," he *becomes* the character. His performance is the best proof that "being" is better than "acting," especially in movies.

Something in common

In a sense, the two movies have something in common aside from their similar titles: They both show their respective movie industries and artists in a state of flux:

The *Pinoy* "Happiness" sustains the momentum of digital movies that has been transforming and reinvigorating filmmaking in the Philippines for the past three years or so.

For its part, Hollywood's "Happyness" shows its lead player, Will Smith, venturing into new thespic territory, eschewing the glitz and gloss of stardom in favor of playing an in-your-face character in a budget production.

Happily, the movie's relative smallness hasn't dissuaded audiences from embracing it and rewarding the radically pared-down production with their enthusiastic patronage.

Our hope is that its Filipino counterpart will be similarly supported by local viewers.

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YOU GOT ME 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30	MUSIC & LYRICS 5:25 / 9:45	IT'S A BOY GIRL THING 12:30 / 2:40 / 7:20	300 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

Ali MALL 5

1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS 12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20	2 THE GOOD SHEPHERD 12:10 R5 / 2:05 / 5:20 / 8:35	3 300 12:50 / 3:20 / 5:50 / 8:20
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	5 YOU GOT ME 12:00 R5 / 1:35 / 3:50 / 6:05 / 8:20	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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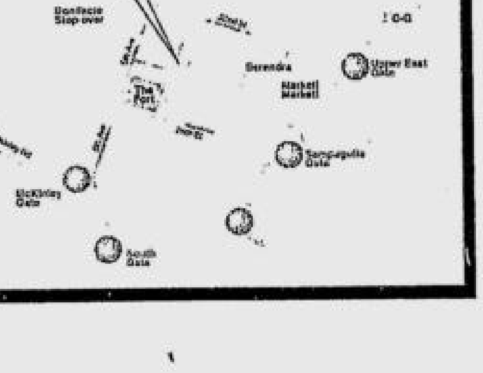

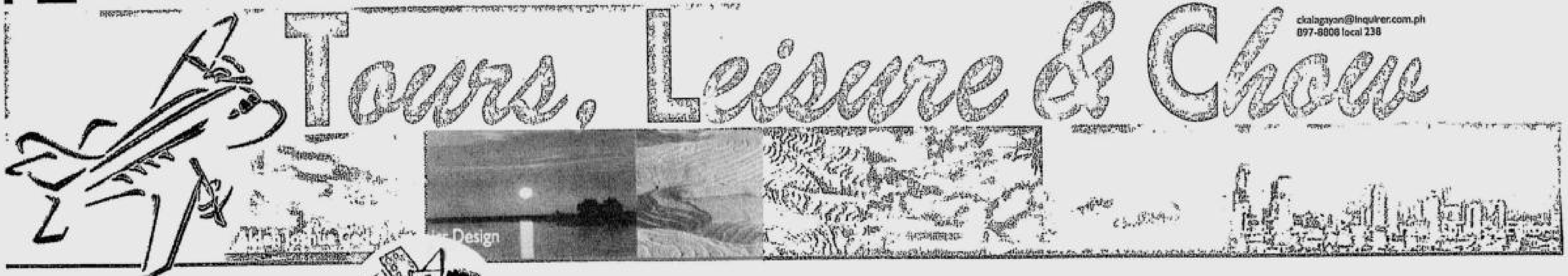

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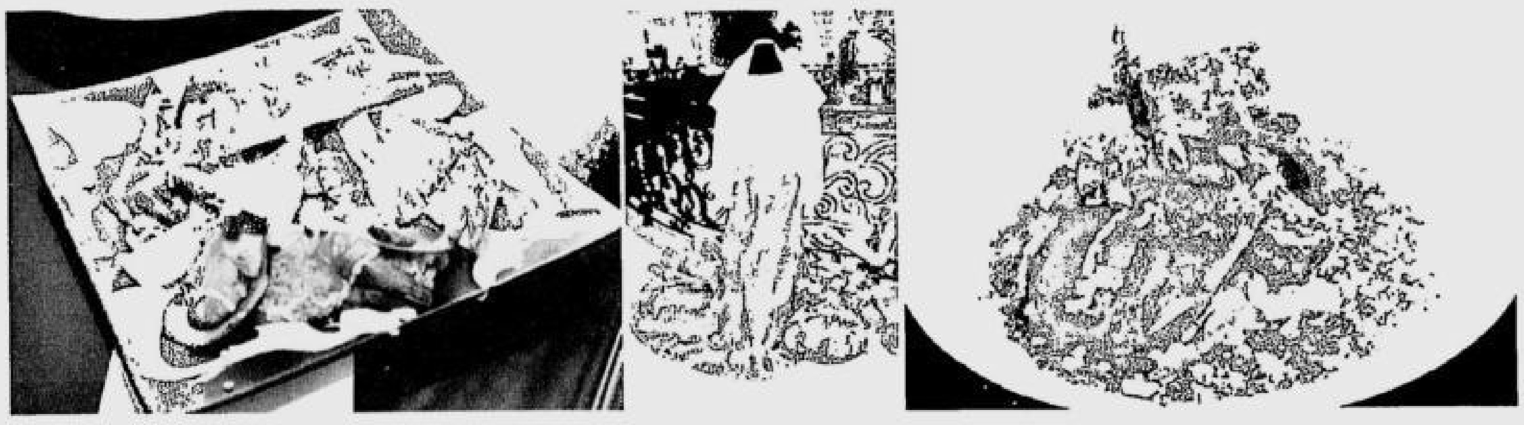
The Bellevue Hotel presents Hot! Haute! Haught!



THE BELLEVUE HOTEL, THE PREMIER FIRST full-service business and leisure hotel and the ultimate concert venue south of Metro Manila presents "Hot! Haute! Haught!," a five-day food, fashion and art festival on March 14-18.

"This exciting event we made especially for Bellevue supporters and guests will showcase the talent of three extraordinary Filipinos. Exceptional culinary creations of French fusion cuisine using local ingredients will be done by Kusina Salud chef Paul Poblador, while inspired couture by designer Patis Tesoro and amazing art pieces by brass sculptor Carlito Ortega will also be on display," Bellevue general manager Patrick Chan says.

Paul Poblador is a chef trained in French cookery. After getting his degree in Hotel & Restaurant Management, he went to study at the California Culinary Academy. When he went back to the Philippines, he worked at top restaurants and hotels, eventually putting up his own restaurant in Baguio together with his wife Nina Tesoro. He now runs Kusina Salud in San Pablo, Laguna, serving favorite Filipino dishes prepared the French way using native ingredients.

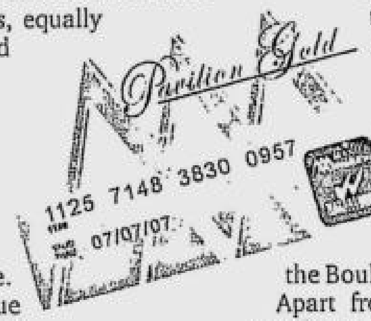
Patis Tesoro is one of the most successful designers in the country. The designer and entrepreneur made her mark in fashion by using traditional fibers such as piña in her awe-inspiring designs of the traditional barong tagalog and other ethnic dress. Through her efforts, thousands of jobs were created for farmers and weavers in the Philippines.

Carlito Ortega was born in Maramag, Bukidnon, amidst a rural setting where farmers lovingly tended their fields. His works of farmers praying for rain and other characters in a pastoral setting reflect the Filipino culture's deep spirituality. His fascination with the three-dimensional and natural became more apparent through his love of antiques, old houses and gardens. Although sculpture is relatively new to him having started only six years ago, he has created masterpieces filled with wonderment and inspiration.

"By showing the genius of these talented Filipinos at our "Hot! Haute! Haught!" event, we hope to make more Filipinos proud of their heritage. We also see this as a venue to show our foreign guests that we are an artistic and truly gifted people," Bellevue marketing and communications director Ryan Chan comments.

The luncheon fashion show will take place on March 17, Saturday. Tickets inclusive of the lunch buffet and fashion show will be available for P1,450 net. For inquiries, call The Bellevue at 771-8181.

Pavilion gold dining privilege card



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People, Events & Products

Acer remains the country's no. 1 notebook PC

ACER, ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP 4 COMPUTER MANUFACTURERS, AGAIN reigned supreme in the notebook product category in the Philippines both for the 4th quarter and the entire year 2006, according to a report from international think-tank Gartner released just recently. Gartner Asia Pacific bared that Acer remains as the top notebook computer seller in the country with a 27.7-percent market share compared to its closest pursuer, which only managed about 18.7 percent for the 4th quarter. For the whole of 2006, on the other hand, Acer's market share in the same category is pegged at 21.7 percent compared to its nearest rival's 15.2-percent share, the report continued. In the overall PC market, Acer again beat out its more illustrious competitors by topping the category with a 5.72-percent market share, with its closest pursuer garnering a 5.68-percent market share for the same quarter. For the overall desktop market, however, Acer managed to bag the number 2 spot with a 2.9-percent share. These newest rankings solidify the fact that Acer has made significant inroads in the company's efforts to provide the country's most demanding consumers with not just superior products but also with innovative, feature-packed, and more importantly, affordable IT products as well.

Thick & Easy, a vital nutritional aid

FRESENIUS KABI, THE LEADER OF INFUSION THERAPY AND CLINICAL nutrition in Europe, has just introduced Thick & Easy in the Philippines. Thick & Easy is a starch-based thickener that when added to food and drinks results in a dense, cohesive consistency that allows patients with swallowing disorders to take in their food. Thick & Easy is a boon to stroke patients, nearly half of which suffer from swallowing disorders caused by weakness or lack of coordination in the mouth and throat muscles. The same can be said for those recovering from thyroid surgery or those with head and neck injuries, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, motor neuron diseases and cerebral palsy. For years, patients had to get their Thick & Easy from the United States or make do with proxy thickeners like gelatin. To mark their availability in the Philippines, Fresenius Kabi is giving away three sample packets of Thick & Easy. All you need to do is call hotline 889-6492 loc. 123 to request your samples and see for yourself how this starch-based thickener allows patients to better control and ingest their food and drinks. Simple to use, Thick & Easy blends quickly and smoothly. It stops thickening after one minute, allowing the food to retain a uniform consistency. Thick & Easy also allows patients to take in a variety of drinks including juice, tea, coffee and even carbonated drinks.

SOMERSET PHILIPPINES RECEIVES INT'L HONORS

It's a triple feat for Somerset Serviced Residence Philippines, winning the Country Excellence Award, Property Excellence Award for Somerset Millennium, Makati, and Residence Manager of the Year for Jobel Ramos, at the recent Ascott Global Conference in Beijing, China. Present during the awarding were (from left) Mel Rose Angeles, area human resources manager; Cristina Ong-Cruz, area director for sales and marketing; Sue Ponnudural, Somerset Olympia, Makati residence manager; Jobel Ramos, Somerset Salcedo, Makati residence manager; Cameron Ong, Ascott Group managing director and CEO; Arthur Gindap, country general manager; and Sheila Morales, area financial controller. Arthur Gindap had this to say of Somerset's steady progress in the Philippines: 'Our constant pursuit towards presenting our residents with a great place to come home to, delivering great service and adding that hint of personal touch, keeps our residents coming back.' Ascott's three properties in the country-Somerset Millenium, Somerset Olympia and Somerset Salcedo-are strategically located in the heart of the commercial and business district of Makati offering residents a balanced and enriched urban style living. For more information on Somerset Serviced Residence Philippines and other Ascott properties, visit http://www.the-ascott.com.

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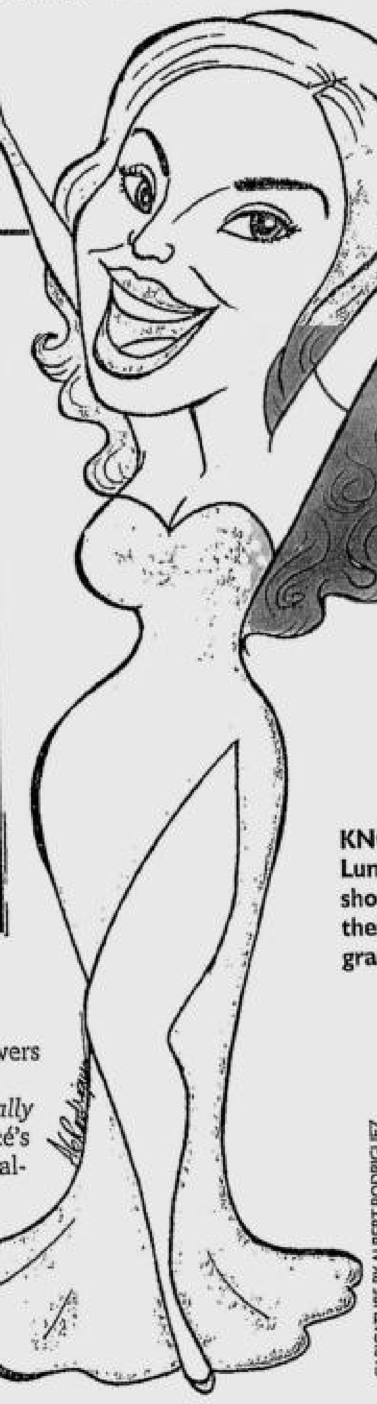
Whose film is it, anyway?

By Nestor U. Torre

HUDSON. Lucky beneficiary of Beyoncé's cluelessness.



KNOWLES. Luminaries like her shouldn't take their stardom for granted.

CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

AFTER WATCHING "DREAMgirls," we sit in the dark, astounded. Then, a key question stumbles toward the light: "Beyoncé Knowles, why in the world did you agree to 'star' in this film in its present form?"

We ask the question because, after all is said and done, it isn't Beyoncé who's the film's real star, but Jennifer Hudson. Whatever possessed Beyoncé, then, to hand the musical over on a silver platter to newcomer Jennifer?

More experienced

Being more experienced in show business, Beyoncé must have sensed that, as written, Jennifer's role would upstage hers like heck, and run away with the film. So, why did she allow it to happen? Whose film is it, anyway?

By rights, the answer to that follow-up question should be: Beyoncé's, naturally. By rights, the biggest star should play the protagonist of a movie, around whose character the central plot revolves, and on whom all eyes in the theater should be focused.

That's what it means to be a star, and it's one of the main reasons why talents "kill" themselves to attain stardom. So, after working so hard (since she was an adolescent) to get her glittering star, why did Beyoncé settle for a role of lesser dramatic importance than Jennifer's?

Whatever the reason, it was a mistake. Beyoncé and her handlers should have known that, as Effie White, Jennifer Hudson had the most dramatic scenes and the best songs in the movie, so Beyoncé's own portrayal would end up being upstaged. True enough, on Academy Awards night, Hudson won an Oscar, while Knowles went home empty-handed.

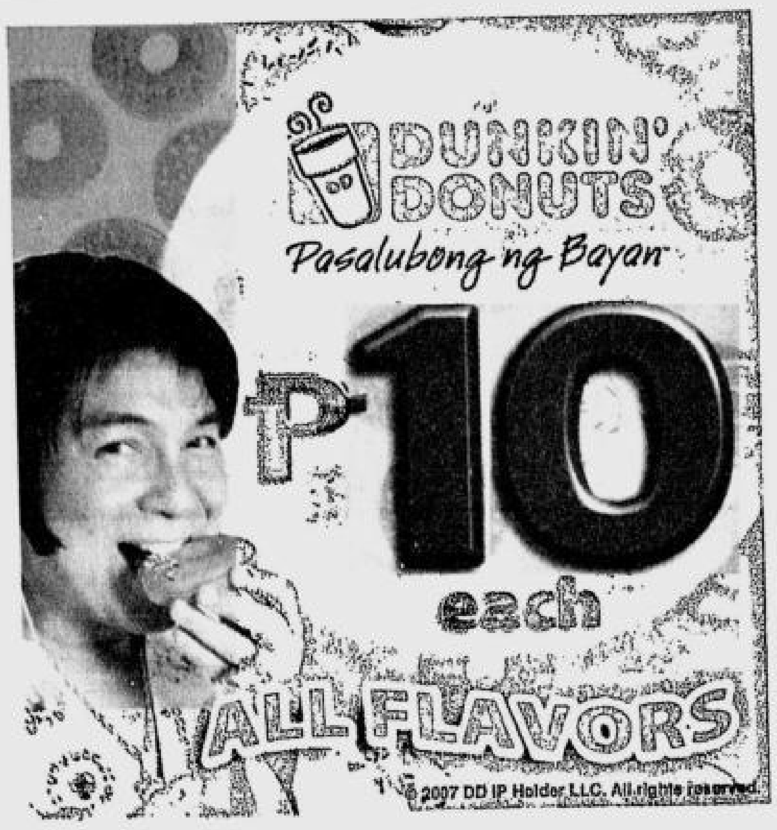
This should serve as a lesson for other stars: Don't take your stardom for granted, know your stellar strengths, uphold them, and don't give them away like candy!

Chances

It's one thing for a star to play a cameo or guest role in a small film to support it and boost its chances at the box office—and it's something else entirely to star in a big film, but in a lesser role!

In the first instance, the star is to be praised. In the second, however, he or she should be rapped for not sufficiently understanding how films work, how they're structured and how viewers respond to them.

For her part, Jennifer is the *really* lucky beneficiary of Beyoncé's cluelessness. But, she should realize that, in her next film outing, she probably won't be as fortunate, since most other stars know what it's all about, and will fight tooth and nail for the central focus their stellar portrayals deserve!



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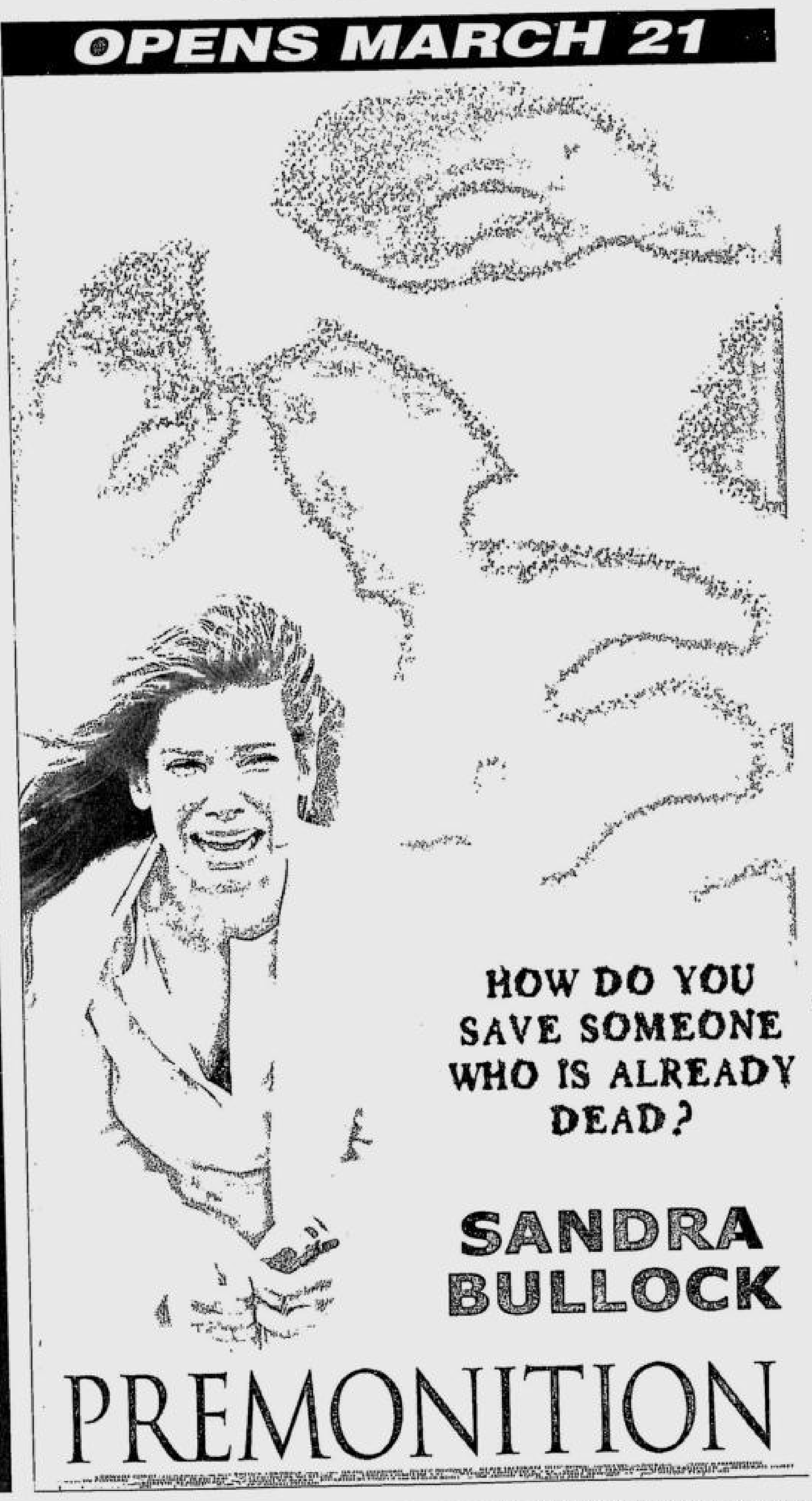

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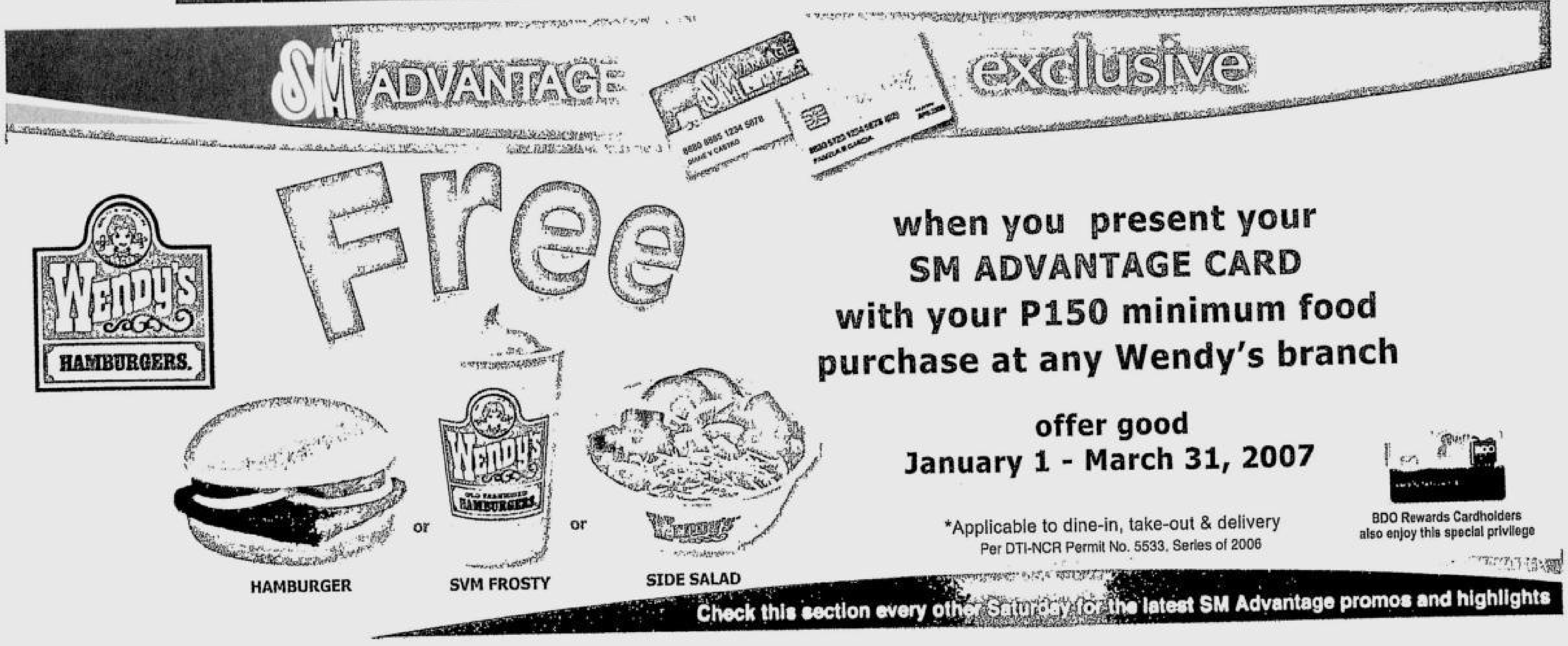

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1 A GOOD SHEPHERD • THX 12:00 3:20 6:40 10:00
2 300 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
3 THE HITCHER 1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
5 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
6 PRIMEVAL 12:40 3:00
GHOST RIDER 5:20 7:40 10:00
7 IT's A BOY GIRL THING 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
8 indieSine: ROME and JULIET 1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00
9 BRIDGE of TERABITHIA 12:40 2:50
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2 IT's A BOY GIRL THING 12:05 2:00 3:55
PRIMEVAL 6:00 8:00 10:00
3 A GOOD SHEPHERD 11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00
4 YOU GOT ME 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
5 THE HITCHER 12:35 2:50 5:05 7:30 10:00
6 DEAD PEOPLE 2 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

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1 THE NUMBER 23 12:50 2:50
BRIDGE of TERABITHIA 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 300 12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10
3 YOU GOT ME 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
4 THE HITCHER 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
5 PRIMEVAL 12:30 2:40
GHOST RIDER 4:50 7:00 9:00
6 A GOOD SHEPHERD 11:00 2:10 5:30 9:00
7 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS 1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9.00

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3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 THE HITCHER

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Ticket Price: P100 687-5378

1 A GOOD SHEPHERD 1:40 5:00 8:20
2 300 1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS 1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40
4 THE HITCHER 12:25 2:30 4:35 6:40 8:40

STA. ROSA

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2 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
3 THE CLEANER
4 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
5 YOU GOT ME

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5 PRIMEVAL

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3 YOU GOT ME
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

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1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 FLUSHED AWAY
4 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS

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1 300
2 PRIMEVAL
3 The PURSUIT of HAPPYNESS
4 YOU GOT ME
5 FLUSHED AWAY

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4 FLUSHED AWAY
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4 PRIMEVAL
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MTRCB Rating: R18

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2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE HITCHER
4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 PRIMEVAL

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 NUMBER 23
5 THE HITCHER
6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
7 DEAD PEOPLE 2
8 YOU GOT ME
9 PRIMEVAL
10 THE PROMISE
11 300
12 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 THE HITCHER
3 300
4 300
5 PRIMEVAL
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 THE HITCHER
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
10 YOU GOT ME
11 DEAD PEOPLE 2
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 THE HITCHER
7 300
8 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 YOU GOT ME
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
7 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 THE HITCHER
10 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 THE HITCHER
5 GHOST RIDER
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 300
2 THE HITCHER
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 GHOST RIDER
9 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 THE HITCHER
3 CATCH AND RELEASE
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 300
7 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
8 PRIMEVAL
9 YOU GOT ME
10 DEAD PEOPLE 2
11 EPIC MOVIE
12 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 300
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 FLUSHED AWAY

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE HITCHER

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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 THE HITCHER
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL
5 300
6 YOU GOT ME
7 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 300
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
4 PRIMEVAL
5 YOU GOT ME
6 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85

1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE PROMISE
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925

1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 YOU GOT ME
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 YOU GOT ME
2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197638-39

1 YOU GOT ME
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 THE FOUNTAIN
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 THE HITCHER
2 300
3 PRIMEVAL
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811

1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 300

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 300
2 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 300
2 FLUSHED AWAY
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GRIFFIN AND PHOENIX

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 300
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 PRIMEVAL
7 RESERVED
8 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 GHOST RIDER
2 300
3 THE HITCHER
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
6 SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS
7 YOU GOT ME
8 PRIMEVAL

SM BACOLOD

NOW OPEN

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 300
4 YOU GOT ME

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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

Touching souls

"TOUCH ANOTHER Soul" is the theme song of Rotary Club Makati Dasmariñas 3830, which was founded in 1994.

Inspired by its mission and vision, Dr. Rebecca B. Singson, FPOGS, charter president, wrote these lyrics:

"From someone so blind, you've learned to see
From someone who's not, you've come to be
From someone so deaf, you've bent to hear
From someone indifferent, you've learned to care.

From someone in hiding,
You've come out of your shell
Once unaware, now you know so well
From someone in search, now you have found
From someone shallow, you've become profound.

Refrain:
Soar above yourself, dig deep and give your all
Spread your wings, cover the earth,
Touch another soul
Soar above yourself, dig deep and give your all
Spread your wings, cover the earth
Join us, touch another soul.

From a civilian, you're now a Rotarian
Living a life that is never barren
From a pool of man, you've been called to glory
Not by chance, but by destiny.

In 1994, Singson's group was the recipient of a grant to mount a nationwide information campaign against *dengue*. The project lasted for five years. Rotary networked with NGOs to launch a more effective campaign.

Assistance

These days, with lawyer Inky Reyes as president, the Rotary Club Makati Dasmarinas 3830 is focused on an information campaign for breastfeeding.

During its last session, the club had the World Health Organization's Dr. Howard Sobel and Alessandro Iellamo as guests.

Those who would like to contribute to the campaign may deposit directly to Rotary Club Makati Dasmarinas 3830, Bank of the Philippine Islands C/A No. 3531-0058-55.

E- mail mandy-navasero@yahoo.com, or call 899-1767.

SINGSON. Wrote lyrics of theme song.

NOW SHOWING

Passion, restraint bolster Will Smith's pursuit of thespic growth

By Rito P. Asilo

"The Pursuit of Happyness"
D: Gabriele Muccino
S: Will Smith, Thandie Newton, and Jaden Smith

WILL SMITH IS NO STRANGER TO challenging roles, but they've been few and far between. In Fred Schepisi's "Six Degrees of Separation" (1993), he tackled homosexuality and morality in a role that showed off a sensitivity never before seen from the erstwhile Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. But, there were self-conscious moments in the film that told us he needed more time to get used to edgy roles.

In 2001's "Ali," Smith unleashed some dramatic punches that brought him his first Oscar nomination for best actor. Despite his feisty portrayal, however, it was nonetheless hard to suspend disbelief that the well-liked movie star was the tortured boxing hero.

This time, in Gabriele Muccino's "The Pursuit of Happyness," Smith delivers the most textured performance of his career. He plays the role of Chris Gardner, a struggling salesman who finds himself in dire straits when his wife, Linda (Thandie Newton), unable to bear their cash-trapped life, suddenly leaves him.

JADEN and Will Smith rise out of the gutter in feel-good drama.

Soon after, he finds himself jobless, penniless, homeless—and with a five-year-old son, Christopher (played by real-life son, Jaden), to feed. What's a guy to do?

With no home and no money, the smart but down-on-his luck father applies for the months-long, incomeless internship program of a top stockbrokerage firm, with only a 20-to-one chance of getting the sole post available.

After office hours, he picks up his son at the day-care center and rush to the homeless shelter for a chance to use one of its few beds overnight. If he doesn't make the cut, he brings his son to the toilet of the railway station—and they sleep there for the night!

The feel-good drama seems formulaic. After all, we know that the person upon whose life the movie's story is based is now a multimillionaire, a bestselling author—and a happy man. But, it's how he persevered in his pursuit of a better life that makes his inspiring rags-to-riches tale worth telling again and again—and an optimistic viewpoint worth emulating.

In an indelibly powerful and stirring portrayal, Smith dissolves into the character completely, and packs his strongest thespic punches in a number of almost-wordless scenes—and there's a lot of those in the film: As he searches for his lost shoe after getting sideswiped by a taxi, or as he convinces his son that sleeping inside a public toilet is part of a game of make-believe, etc.

Jaden, obviously his talented father's son, plays his part like a real pro, and effortlessly steals hearts without resorting to the usual I'm-a-cute-moppet shtick.

Muccino shows that bad things do happen to good people, but her film's protagonist deftly demonstrates man's need to hold on to and fight for his dreams.

Gardner shows that, sometimes, it isn't fate that brings luck and happiness, but the passion and perseverance to make them happen.

Fresh, idiosyncratic lineup for *Radioactive Sago*

By Noelani Torre

THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE ABOUT Radioactive Sago Project's third album is its title, "T******** Andaming Nagugutom Sa Mundo Fashionista Ka Pa Rin" (Terno Recordings). It is, swear word or not, hard to ignore.

Despite the provocative title, however, this isn't really a political album, nor—as they themselves keep asserting—is Radioactive Sago a political band.

Corruption

It just happens that they first gained fame in 2000 with the single, "Gusto Ko Ng Baboy," which criticized the government and its different forms of corruption, and that they have some social commentary in their songs every now and then. Their most recent hit single, "Astro," though, is more existential than political.

In truth, it's quite difficult to put a label on the kind of music that the group comes up with. It's jazz, funk, punk, pop, rock, and spoken-word.

And, if you ask them what their songs are about, the typical answer is, "*Wala lang.*" More often than not, the songs' lyrics have a stream-of-consciousness quality that sometimes has buried insight and, at other times is really *wala lang*.

In "Andaming Nagugutom," for example, the song, "Wasak na Wasak," is about, er, feeling destroyed? Or something. On the other hand, "Nasusunog ang Maynila" describes some of the more depressing conditions we encounter in our fair city.

Vocalist and frontman Lourd de Veyra writes the lyrics. A Palanca award-winning writer, his style is irreverent, tongue-in-cheek, and intelligent. What sounds like pure nonsense sometimes turns out to have unexpected inferences.

Ideas

Lourd's brother, bassist and back-up vocalist Francis, is in charge of composing and arranging the music, with the rest of the band contributing their own ideas here and there.

Aside from the De Veyra brothers, the band is made up of guitarist Junji Lerma; drummer Jay Gapasin; percussionist Arwin Nava; William Ansano on trumpet; Pards Tupas on trombone; Ryan Zapanta on saxophone, and Rastem Eugenio on tenor sax.

The lineup is fairly atypical, and it results in idiosyncratic music that is both interesting and fun to listen to. There are hordes of rock bands out there, most of whom churn out homogeneous-sounding corporate rock that hardly has an ounce of originality.

Thank God, then, that there are still bands like Radioactive Sago Project.

RADIOACTIVE SAGO PROJECT. Their music is interesting and fun to listen to.

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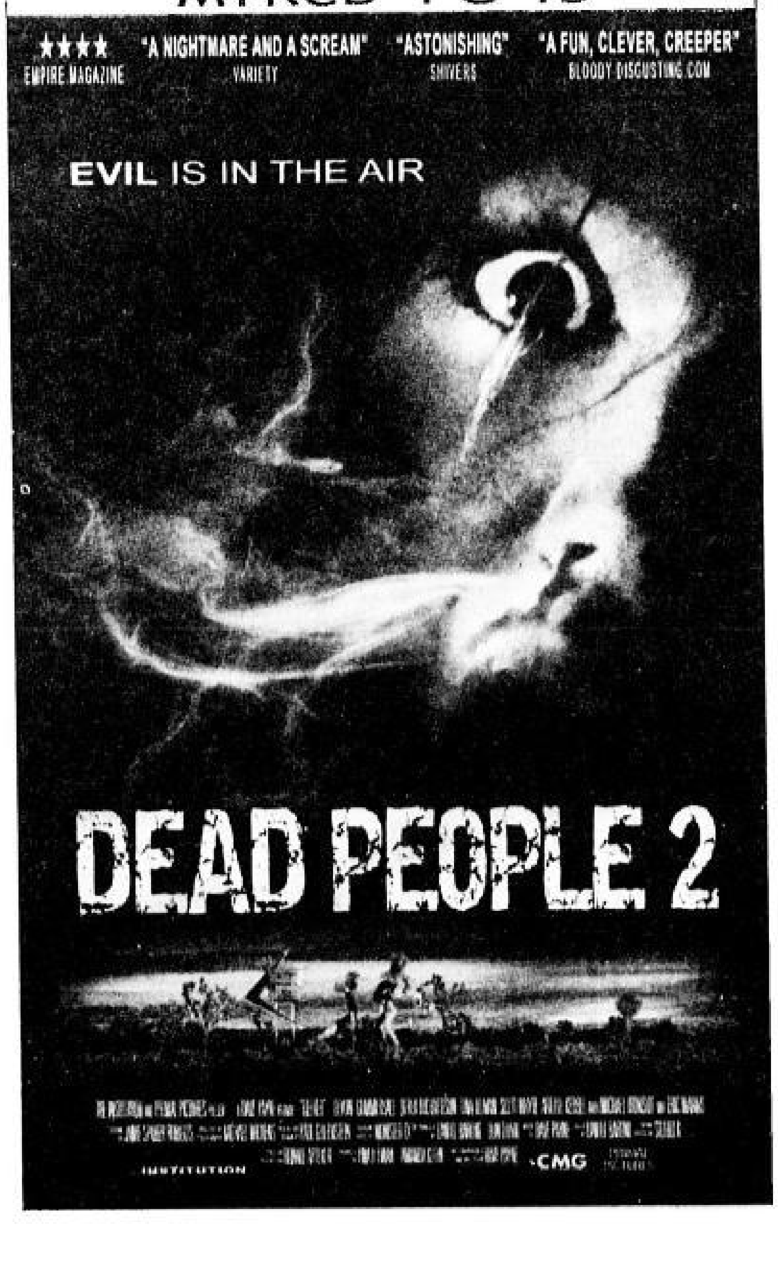
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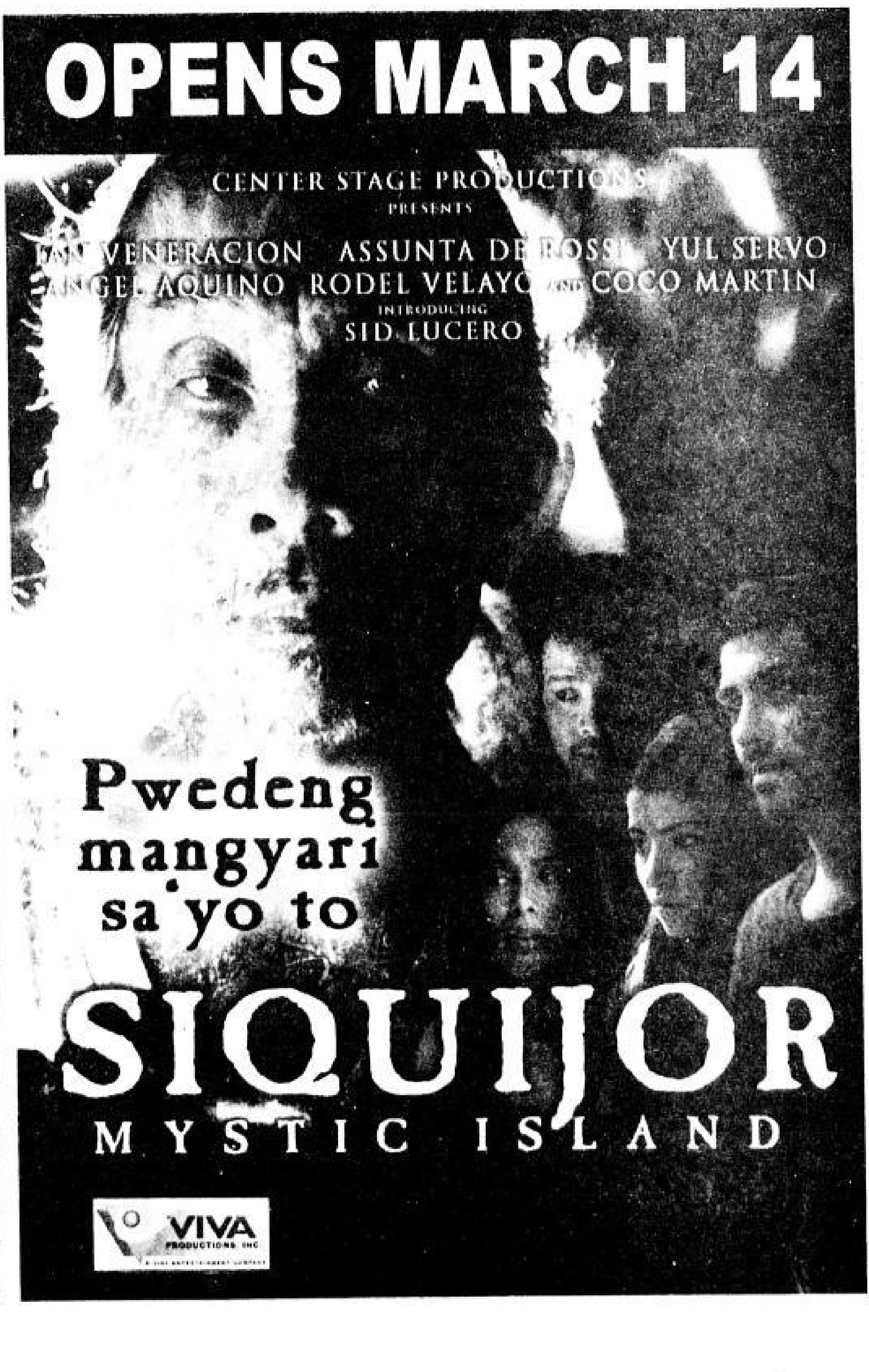

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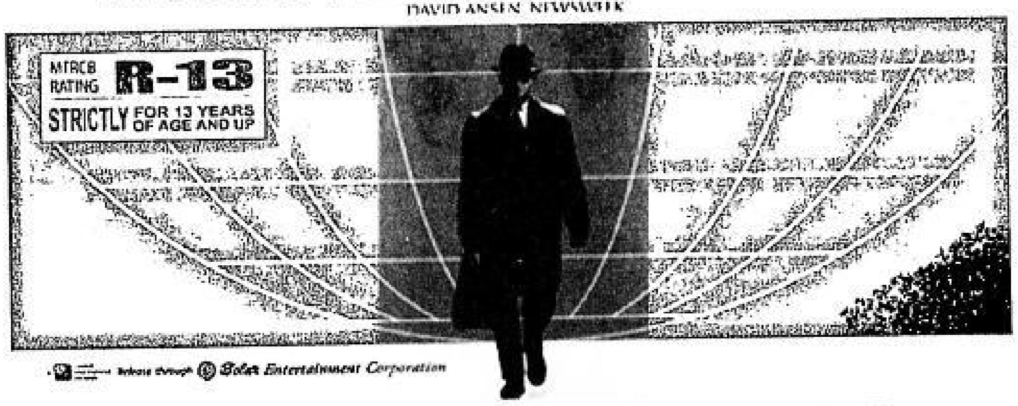

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NOW SHOWING

Cinemalaya 2007 enters shooting phase

By Nestor U. Torre

THE 10 FINALISTS IN THE 2007 Cinemalaya alternative film festival have been announced, and film buffs want to know more about these winning projects, each of which will be given a P500,000 production grant by Tonyboy Cojuangco. Here are their thumbnail sketches:

"2,999" by James Arnold B. Ladioray is about what happens to one of the 3,000 pairs of shoes Imelda Marcos was believed to have owned.

Dead-end lives

"Endo," written by Michiko Yamamoto and Jade Castro, depicts the downbeat and dead-end lives of young Filipinos slaving away at low-paying jobs that last for only six months.

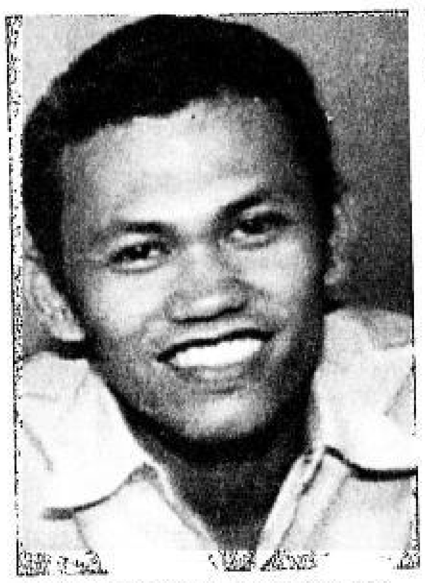
"Pisay" by Auraeus Solito is about life at the Philippine Science High School in the 1980s.

"Kadin" by Adolf Alix Jr. is set in Batanes and follows a boy as he searches for his lost goat all over the place, even as natural and human forces conspire to frustrate him at every turn.

"Still Life" by Katrina Flores is about how life and art conflict and converge.

"Ligaw Liham" by Jay Abello shows how lives and loves are affected when letters aren't delivered, or arrive too late and are thus overtaken by events.

"Gulong," written by Jeanne Lim and directed by Sockie Fernandez, follows a group of children as they try to raise money to finance a bicycle trip to a prized destination, showing that the journey can be as instructive and life-transforming as the destination.



ALIX. Currently filming "Kadin" in Batanes.

"Tukso" by Dennis Marasigan is an adult drama about love and lust.

"Tribu" by Jim Libiran takes viewers into the fetid subculture of urban street gangs, governed by their own codes of life and death.

Love and treachery

"Sinungaling na Buwan" by Ed Lejano is about interweaving lives and fates affected by love and treachery.

These 10 finalists were chosen out of a particularly strong field of 24 finalists, which had survived the first cut from an initial field of 240 entries, a Cinemalaya record to date.

This augurs well for the 2007 competition, which has already entered its shooting phase. It could be the best Cinemalaya festival yet, if the finalists fulfill their potential.

And there's a good chance of that happening, since most of their proponents have good track records in independent filmmaking, and can thus be expected to support their artistry with solid technique.

Of course, a lot can happen between screenplay and finished film. So, to help iron out whatever wrinkles may manifest themselves during production, experienced production people have been tapped as the competition's production coordinators.

Latest batch

With everyone doing his best to make sure that Cinemalaya 2007 comes up with superior films, we trust that the festival will once again provide a career-boosting showcase for its latest batch of new filmmakers.

The first Cinemalaya helped the talented likes of Doy del Mundo, Michiko Yamamoto, Auraeus Solito and Rica Arevalo gain film buffs' attention and acclaim.

The second Cinemalaya added the names of Mike Sandejas, Adolf Alix and Ron Bryant to the growing list. We trust that the 2007 Cinemalaya's strong lineup of gifted new feature filmmakers will set an even higher standard for subsequent editions of the tilt to follow.

Triumphs and failures on Hallmark

MONTAGE

EVERY PERSON HAS A UNIQUE story to be told. This month, the Hallmark Channel regales and inspires viewers with films that dramatize their protagonists' triumphs and failures, to great empathetic effect.

March 12, "Passion of Ayn Rand" topbills new Oscar awardee, Helen Mirren, as the famous philosopher-writer who has an affair with a younger man.

March 13, "Locked in Silence" delves into a young boy's mutism, which distresses his loving parents and puts them on the brink of financial ruin.

March 14, "The Runaway" is about two boys who discover a secret their town has long buried, and a rookie sheriff solves the mystery.

March 15, "Snow in August" dramatizes the moving friendship between an 11-year-old boy and a Jewish rabbi, and reminds all weary souls to never stop believing in miracles. (Other films detailed next week).

Direct to DVD

"Rest Stop," the first film in the direct-to-DVD "Raw Feed" series, is written and directed by John Shiban. Starring Jaimie Alexander, the film follows a young couple terrorized by a psychotic killer on a cross-country road trip. Bonus features include two alternate endings, the film's trailer, and a unique family album from one of the movie's oddest characters.

'Because I Said So'

Diane Keaton teams up with Mandy Moore in "Because I Said So," a romantic comedy about a mother who believes that she knows what's best for her daughter, and sets her up with the "perfect" man. She even places an ad in the online personals to find him!

But, is the man of her dreams the responsible architect Jason, or the free-spirited rocker Johnny? The mother pushes her daughter to make "smart" decisions until she rights the wrongs in her own life—or drives her offspring nuts!

"Because I Said So" also stars Gabriel Macht, Tom Everett Scott and Stephen Collins.

KEATON AND MOORE. Play mother and daughter in new romantic-comedy.

'Bosom Buddies'

Hot Babes Sheree and Jennifer Lee scorch up the screen in the new sexy video, "Bosom Buddies," which pulsates with rousing rock 'n' roll, steamy striptease, and sensual fantasy trips. Provocative gothic vignettes sizzle as the Babes play erotic rock goddesses. Also featured are new Hot Babes Katrina, Sachie, Vanessa, Scarlet and Caria. On DVD and VCD.

"THE RUNAWAY." A long-forgotten secret is revealed.

'Into the Woods' auditions

The New Voice Company announces auditions for its 13th season offering, Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's "Into the Woods," on March 17 and 18 from 2 to 6 p.m. Up for grabs are 17 principal roles including Cinderella, Jack, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Granny, Mysterious Man, the Prince, the Witch, the Wolf, the Wicked Stepmother, the Wicked Stepsisters Florinda and Lucinda, and the Narrator. For details, call NVC at 896-5497, or visit www.newvoicecompany.com.

Evolution of videogame

This month, Discovery Channel explores the history and art of gaming in the new series, "I, Videogame." Featuring interviews with giants of the gaming industry, the five-part series examines the evolution of the videogame and its impact on the entertainment scene. Every Friday at 7 p.m. beginning March 16.

Premiering on Discovery at 9 p.m. on March 12 is "Guge: The Lost Kingdom of Tibet," which recalls the rise and fall of an empire which once rivaled the cities of Venice and Florence.

'Art to Art'

As prima ballerina Lisa Macuja celebrates her 21st year in ballet, she debuts on radio by way of the dzRH program, "Art to Art," which is broadcast every Sunday at 3 p.m. Art lovers are invited to tune in to Lisa's new show, one of only a few arts-related programs on the air.

Enchanted Kingdom

The recent Chinese New Year celebration of Enchanted Kingdom included a rocking performance of the Jeans Band with actor Jericho Rosales. For future events at the popular theme park, call 830-2111 to 16, or log on to www.enchanted-kingdom.com.ph.

'Turistas'

Watch out for "Turistas," a teen-action thriller about a group of young tourists who get trapped in a

TRIUMPHS/ F5

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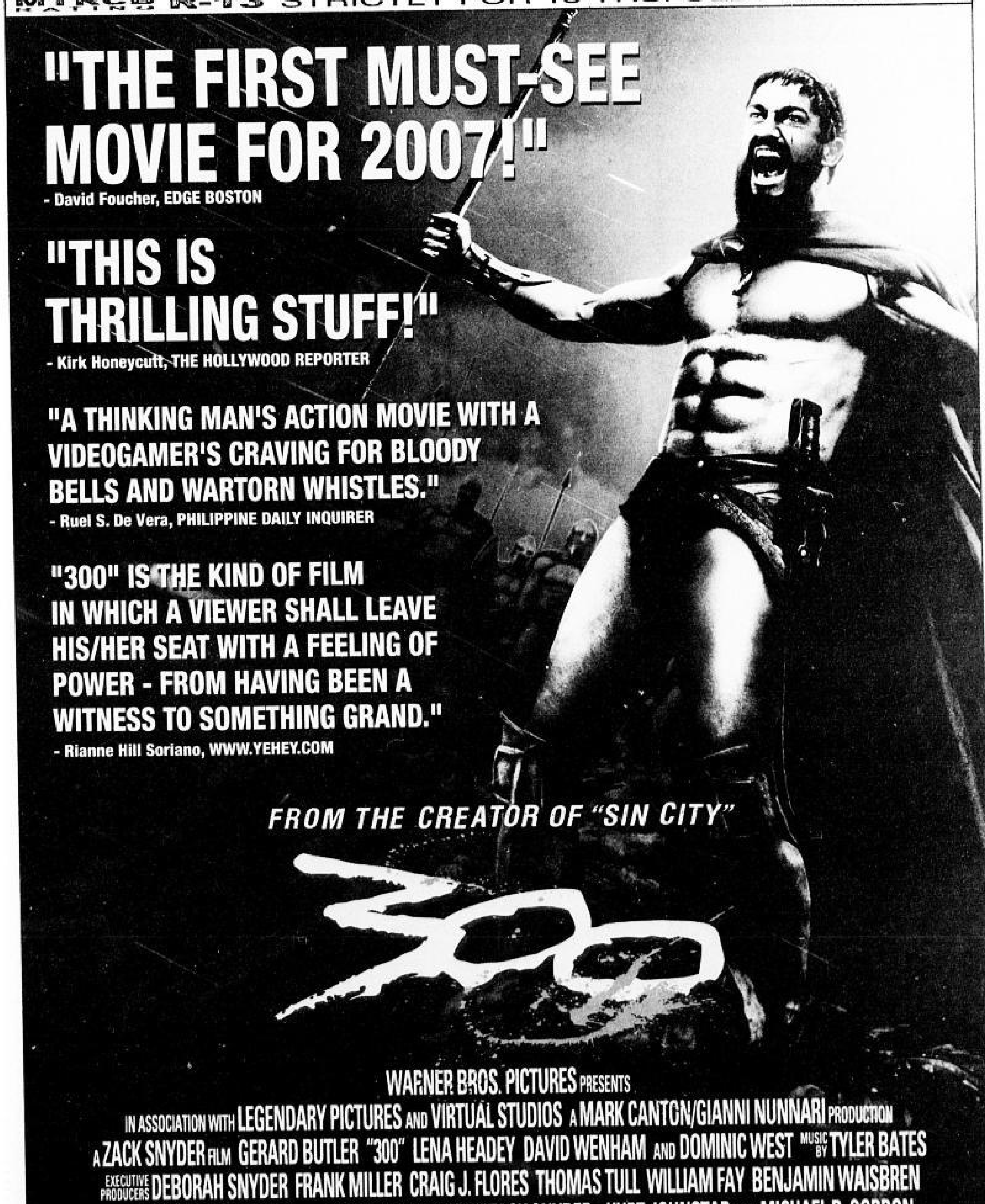

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Who says Hollywood stardom is strictly homegrown?

By Behn Cervantes

GARBO. Made the grandest entrance into the talkies.

WE GOT A LOT OF INFORMATION about old Hollywood stars from Judy Garland fan, Mila Manayon: From a list of 50 legendary stars, 13 made the successful crossover from the silent era to the talkies—Lillian Gish, Joan Crawford, Greta Garbo, Barbara Stanwyck, Carole Lombard, Mary Pickford, Clark Gable, Charlie Chaplin, Gary Cooper, John Wayne, the Marx Brothers, Buster Keaton and Edward G. Robinson.

It was Garbo who made the grandest entrance into the era of the talkies, because when her fans were about to hear the legendary star talk on the silver screen for the first time, Hollywood drumbeaters advertised her forthcoming film with the banner headline: "Garbo talks!"

Trademark

And, she did very well, albeit with the Swedish accent that became her trademark. Her most famous line, "I vant to be alone!," also described her solitary nature and her unusual desire for privacy.

Many contemporaries of the lucky 13 had disastrous career reversals when the talkies came, because they simply didn't have the voices to go with their good looks.

Interestingly, 13 more American film legends weren't born in the United States: Audrey Hepburn, for example, came from Belgium. With her mother, she later escaped to England when the Nazis occupied her native land. The glamorous and feisty Elizabeth Taylor was born in England. Garbo came from Sweden, where she worked as a masseuse. Like Garbo, Ingrid Bergman was also born in Sweden.

Marlene Dietrich was born in Germany. Sophia Loren was from Sicily, while Claudette Colbert was born in France. As-American-as-apple pie Mary Pickford was from Canada. Vivien Leigh, who nabbed two Oscars playing Southern belles, was born in India!

Comic genius

Comic genius Charlie Chaplin, acclaimed Shakespearean actor-director Laurence Olivier and tall, dark and handsome Cary Grant were all born in merrie olde England, while Edward G. Robinson was born in Romania.

Eight screen legends were from New York City: Lauren Bacall, Barbara Stanwyck, Mae West, Rita Hayworth, Humphrey Bogart, James Cagney, Burt Lancaster and the Marx Brothers. Six of them were of Jewish descent.

Movie moppet

Only four of those legends are still alive: Lauren Bacall, who managed to carve a career on Broadway after Bogart passed away; erstwhile movie moppet, Shirley Temple, who had a distinguished career in diplomacy, Kirk Douglas and Sidney Poitier, the first African-American to win a best actor Oscar.

The latter continues to shine as a bright example for the likes of Denzel Washington, Jamie Foxx and Forrest Whitaker, who have followed Poitier's legendary footsteps to receive their own golden statuettes from the Academy.

'Survivor: Fiji' exit hasn't dampened Liliana's fighting spirit

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

GOMEZ. Focusing on her singing career.

LAST WEEK, MALE VIEWERS OF "Survivor: Fiji," the popular reality show's 14th season, got the shock of their lives when one of the show's sexiest castaways—the exotic Liliana Gomez—was voted off by the Tribal Council.

The 25-year-old mortgage officer from California is the second of eight siblings, and has served with the US Marine Corps for eight years—including a memorable stint in Iraq!

We spoke with Liliana on the phone last Thursday and, despite her infectiously cheery disposition, she too confessed that she didn't expect to leave the show when she did. But, she's taking her "eviction" with a grain of salt.

What struck us during our short chat, however, was the fact that the exotic-looking beauty wasn't ready to spew her venom against friends and foes who gave her the boot. Excerpts:

Are you a big fan of "Survivor"?

I did know about it, but I wasn't a huge fan of the show. But, since I don't own a TV, I'm not glued to it on a daily basis.

Is it safe to say that judging at the Tribal Council is fair?

It's hard to say. The thing about this game is, you're totally out of your comfort zone. You do things that you wouldn't normally do. You see people crack under pressure all the time. It's the "not knowing" that creates excitement for the viewer.

What's tougher: Iraq or "Survivor"?

(Laughs) Iraq was difficult and extreme—we were exposed to a very hostile environment. I don't ever want to be in that situation again. "Survivor" was fun for me… all the way. The only thing harder than being in the Marine Corps was growing up with my parents and my siblings. They are super-strict, and I love them for making me tough and strong. They made me a fighter.

Who were the people you formed your strongest alliances with?

On a personal basis, I connected with Erica, Jessica and Rocky.

What was your most memorable experience while you were on the show?

The challenges! I liked the people I met, but it's the challenges that I really loved—they made me feel like a 10-year-old kid playing games! I'm a tomboy at heart, so everytime a new challenge came up, I got so excited!

Are you rooting for anybody in particular to win the game?

It's Cassandra who really stands out for me, because she's unpredictable.

What surprised you most about the show?

I was surprised that you couldn't get any privacy at all! Even when you had to go to the restroom, a camera would follow. So, I said, "Don't follow me, I'm going by myself! Leave me alone!" *(laughs)*

I know that you love to perform. What's next for you? Acting, singing? You sure look like a movie star.

Why, thank you! Honestly? I'm open to acting. I'm actually a singer, and my focus now is on my singing career. I am recording songs for an upcoming album, mainly Latin R&B, a bit of world music, and with a lot of percussion and Spanish guitars!

'TVM' underscores need to end culture of silence, violence

By Sharon Robas-Macawile

ALAJAR. Lost herself in every character she portrayed.

WE MISSED EVE ENSLER'S controversial but critically acclaimed play, "The Vagina Monologues" and its Filipino version when it first took the local theater scene by storm. We must admit that its provocative theme didn't entice us to watch it back then.

Fast-forward to 2007; we suppose we've matured, so we mustered enough courage and conviction to join the throng of "TVM" followers who saw the phenomenal play last Tuesday at the Philtrade Center.

Translation

The Tagalog translation of the title itself—"Usaping Puki"—would make a lot of people squirm or blush in embarrassment. Talking about the "p" word in public is almost taboo in a conservative country like ours. More often than not, doing so is considered scandalous, if not downright *bastos*.

With an open mind, we went to the show "prepared"—and braced ourselves for what we were going to hear.

Were we shocked? Yes and no. Yes, because of our inadequate knowledge about the scope of worldwide sex-trafficking against women and children. To our surprise, we weren't shocked at the mention of the "p" word.

Having the monologues translated into our own language made the theatrical experience more intimate. It may have seemed more graphic, but it was much more easily understood, felt—and appreciated.

Pinky Amador, Missy Maramara and award-winning TV and film actress Gina Alajar gave life to the various monologues about women's happy and painful experiences with their vaginas.

Moving moments

The production has funny and moving moments, and the trio's thespic skills and powerful interpretations were showcased in every monologue. Anecdotes about the many "names" associated with the female genitalia, as well as their various names in different dialects delighted the audience. The "smell" portion also brought the house down.

Amador's monologue about women's different orgasmic moans tickled viewers and exemplified the actress' versatility. But, we were in awe everytime Alajar would deliver her piece. She lost herself in every character she portrayed and the audience instantly felt a connection with her. Her delivery was full of passion.

Maramara's combination of youthfulness and intensity moved us to tears, especially when she delivered the Bosnia piece about rape and war. And, when she asked the audience to say the "p" word out loud, we didn't hesitate to obey!

What makes these monologues even more touching is that they're true stories of women, based on interviews conducted by Ensler herself. The struggle to be freed from the bondage of sexual repression reverberates in these tales.

At the start of the play, the first mention of the "p" word made the man seated beside us squirm.

We wondered how many other men in the audience that night felt the same way! Sadly, a lot of Filipinos have yet to get over the feeling of discomfort with the mere mention of the word.

Although the four-letter Tagalog word for female genitalia elicited laughter—and probably enraged some—the production effectively conveyed the message that it's nothing to be ashamed of. It opened our eyes to love and appreciate womanhood.

Voice

Yes, there were scenes and lines that could be offensive to conservative viewers, but the play in its entirety has a liberating effect—it empowers women and gives voice to countless others who continue to suffer in silence.

We hope the play—especially its Filipino version—can reach out to as many Filipinos as possible. And, before you say or think it's *bastos*, go see the play first and make your judgment later.

Mariah Carey plays country singer in 'Tennessee'

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—Mariah Carey turned some heads in Nashville while filming scenes for the upcoming movie, "Tennessee." The R&B diva is playing an aspiring country signer who flees her controlling husband in New Mexico by moving to Nashville with her two brothers.

Last week, she sang at the downtown honky-tonk Second Fiddle. She co-wrote "Right to Dream" with Willie Nelson and performed it with Nelson's harmonica player, Mickey Raphael.

Context

"People were weeping when she sang it," director Aaron Woodley told The Tennessean. "It's very moving, especially in the context of the film and her character."

Earlier, they shot on location in Dunlap, about 32 km north of Chattanooga, and at Cumberland Caverns in McMinnville. Later, they filmed some train scenes on trips between Nashville and Lebanon.

"There I am, sitting on the edge of a boxcar with Mariah Carey, breezing through town," Woodley said. "We slowed down to go over a bridge, and there were people sitting in cars. They did a double-take: 'I swear I just saw Mariah Carey on a boxcar!'" *AP*

SM execs reiterate support for digital filmmakers

By Ronald G. Mangubat

INDEPENDENT FILMS WHICH were part of last year's Cinemalaya Film Festival are being shown in selected SM cinemas all over the country. This is the SM management's way of showing their all-out support for the digital film wave and helping the public develop appreciation for unconventional film fare.

Projectors

According to engineer Ric Camaligan, vice president for operations of SM Leisure Groups, ever since the SM management decided to buy digital projectors, the owners of the biggest chain of malls in the country have made it clear that they want to support digital filmmakers.

An emerging trend in local entertainment, digital movies provide an alternative viewing experience for moviegoers with their fresh and edgier approach to cinematic storytelling.

"SM management knows the power and influence of movies, that's why they instructed me to take care of the cinema division," explains Camaligan. "Three years ago, we started showing films like 'Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros,' and we're doing that again by showing last year's Cinemalaya entries.

Last Mar. 7, Media Revolution's "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?," the top box-office grosser in last year's Cinemalaya, opened in SM cinemas nationwide.

Patronage

While patronage for digital films still pales in comparison to mainstream productions, Camaligan, who is also the president of the National Cinema Association of the Philippines, explains that SM's support, by way of providing a venue for alternative films, is part of a long process of educating the masses.

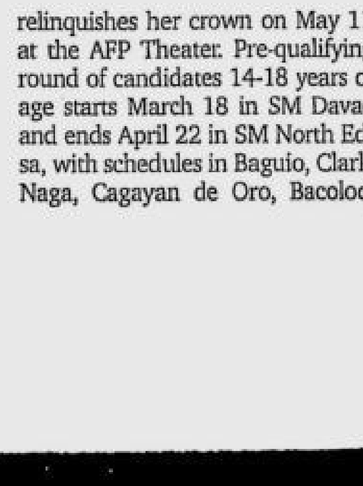
He reasons, "We've been talking to the producers and distributors of independent films, and we also give suggestions based on our observations about the people who queue up at our cinemas. As of now, mainstream movies still lord it over the box office, but we hope that our support for alternative films can help them develop a larger following."

Triumphs and failures on Hallmark

From page F4

remote Brazilian beach town after a terrifying bus accident. The situation then becomes a game of survival as the unexpected happens. The gripping film's young stars include exciting new leads, Olivia Wilde and Josh Duhamel.

'Journey to Hope' at the AFP Theater


MADELA. Sings show tunes.

Don't miss the fusion of exquisite voices when Jed Madela, Bituin Escalante, Karylle, Dre Ybañez and Nenen Espina team-up in the special concert, "Journey to Hope," at the AFP Theater on March 16 at 8 p.m. They will render timeless tunes from the legitimate stage. Call 426-5908, or TicketWorld at 891-9999.

Ms Teen Philippines 2007

Fifteen-year-old Juliann Savard, reigning Ms Teen Philippines 2006, relinquishes her crown on May 11 at the AFP Theater. Pre-qualifying round of candidates 14-18 years of age starts March 18 in SM Davao and ends April 22 in SM North Edsa, with schedules in Baguio, Clark, Naga, Cagayan de Oro, Bacolod, Sta. Rosa, Laguna and Cebu. Thirty finalists will be chosen. For details, call 672-3876 or 672-3904.

Symposium at St. John's Academy

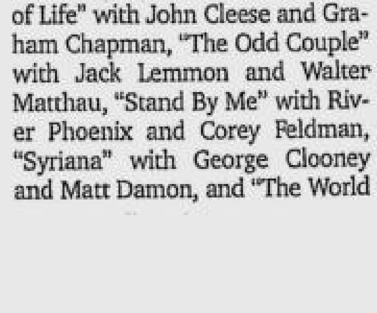
A symposium on "Teenage Pimples, Herpes, Warts and AIDS," was recently held by Dra. Lonabel Encarnacion, before the graduating high school class of St. John's Academy. Dra. Encarnacion is head of the Dermatology Unit of St. Luke's Medical Center, which has launched a series of talks as part of its outreach information campaign for the youth.

In addition to skin care and the treatment of acne, the talk zeroed in on a sex education briefing on the repercussions of irresponsible pre-marital sexual activities.

Recitation of rosary

EWTN will air a live recitation of the rosary with Pope Benedict XVI from 10:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. (Manila time) today in front of the main building of the University of Santo Tomas in celebration of the fifth Day of European Universities in Rome, Italy, it was announced by Edwin Lopez, manager of EWTN Asia-Pacific office. Representatives from 10 different countries, including the Philippines, will participate.

On HBO


SAVARD. Will relinquish her Ms Teen Philippines crown on May 11.

HBO screens these viewing treats this month: "About Last Night" with Rob Lowe and Demi Moore, "Assault on Precinct 13" with Ethan Hawke and Laurence Fishburne, "Beetlejuice" with Michael Keaton and Alec Baldwin, "Bopha" with Danny Glover and Malcolm McDowell, "Catch-22" with Alan Arkin and Richard Benjamin, "Dolores Claiborne" with Kathy Bates and Jennifer Jason-Leigh, "Heaven Can Wait" with Warren Beatty and Julie Christie;

"Monty Python's The Meaning of Life" with John Cleese and Graham Chapman, "The Odd Couple" with Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, "Stand By Me" with River Phoenix and Corey Feldman, "Syriana" with George Clooney and Matt Damon, and "The World According to Garp" with Robin Williams and Glenn Close.

On Cinemax

Should-see films on Cinemax this month: "Alfie" (1966) with Michael Caine and Shelley Winters, "Apt Pupil" with Brad Renfro and Ian McKellen, "Arlington Road" with Jeff Bridges and Tim Robbins, "Battle of the Bulge" with Henry Fonda and Robert Shaw, "Carlito's Way" with Al Pacino and Sean Penn, "Easy Rider" with Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper, "Rebel Without a Cause" with James Dean and Natalie Wood;

"The Cowboy Way" with Woody Harrelson and Keifer Sutherland, "The Forgotten" with Julianne Moore and Dominic West, "The Searchers" with John Wayne and Vera Miles, "Tobruk" with Rock Hudson and George Peppard, and "Trading Places" with Eddie Murphy and Dan Aykroyd.

Cate Blanchett evokes ERA of old Hollywood

NEW YORK—DAYS AFTER PLAYING AN alluring English art teacher, Cate Blanchett adopted a German accent to transform herself into an enigmatic World War II prostitute in a performance some liken to Marlene Dietrich.

Such transition is not unusual for the Australian actress hailed for her work ethic, intellect and cool charm emblematic of leading figures of a Hollywood era long gone. Film professionals say Blanchett, 37, who won a best supporting actress Oscar two years ago for portraying Katharine Hepburn in "The Aviator," has a long career ahead similar to some of Hollywood's greats.

Art teacher

Three showy roles came one after another: "Babel" opposite Brad Pitt, "The Good German" co-starring George Clooney, and "Notes on a Scandal," in which she plays an art teacher opposite Judi Dench.

"She seems other-worldly," said Steven Soderbergh, director of "The Good German," noting Blanchett's short preparation time for the film shot in black and white as a tribute to 1940s Hollywood films including "Casablanca."

"It seemed to appear from out of nowhere," Soderbergh said of her performance while in New York to promote the movie. "I have never seen anything like that." Clooney told reporters she was "Spencer Tracy-like" for her ability to slip in and out of character. And Variety said Blanchett "summons up shades of Dietrich, to be sure."

BLANCHETT. Has the ability to slip in and out of character.

But, the blond Blanchett told Reuters, "I had to use my own resources and invent a personal version, because what was the point of imitating Marlene Dietrich? She does it perfectly herself!"

While Blanchett has yet to achieve the status of Dietrich or Garbo, Soderbergh said her desire to play different characters would ensure a long reign in the movies. "We are eventually going to compare other people to her," Soderbergh said.

Blanchett said playing opposite Dench, 72, in "Notes on a Scandal" was a career highlight. Looking at the endurance of the respected British actress, Blanchett said she would be satisfied "if I can have the diversity and length of her career, and half her talent." She viewed her own career choices as "erratic and random."

Leading men

"I'd like to say I have a five-year plan, but I am not Stalinesque," she added. But, just as Blanchett cemented a place opposite leading men such as Pitt and Clooney, she recently announced she will take over running the Sydney Theater Company starting on a three-year basis with playwright husband, Andrew Upton, in 2008.

Blanchett doesn't care to explain the move to those obsessed with making big-budget Hollywood films.

After her recent theater-directing debut with the company, she will continue to make films through a clause in her contract that allows her to take a three-month break per year.

Reuters

Developing teamwork

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

OUR SPIRITUAL TEACHER ONCE GAVE A talk about how people can work together to accomplish noble goals. He shared these pointers:

1. A good leader has good motives. People who help others even without any material reward accept the hardship that comes with the responsibility. They exercise compassion; they desire to alleviate the suffering of others.

Real intention

Instead of judging external actions, they look into their hearts to understand the situation. It's easier to understand a man's decision if you know his real intention. (If you have a leader whose motives aren't good, following him becomes difficult. So, choosing a worthy leader is necessary.)

2. Learn to accept the leader's strategy. A ship must follow its captain just as a symphony takes its cue from a conductor. Respect your leader and learn to follow him.

3. Don't keep anger in your heart. Don't agree grudgingly then reject what you have agreed to do. Follow the plan and work hard to achieve your goal.

4. Deal with the issues and learn to resolve problems without resorting to destructive criticism. A Chinese saying goes: "Criticize yourself three times a day. Don't mention the imperfection of other individuals."

Imperfections

Tackle problems objectively. Pointing out imperfections won't help you achieve your goal. Offer practical and constructive criticism. This approach will strengthen relationships among members of the team.

5. Don't waste precious time getting stuck in an argument. Spare yourself from nonsense. Discipline the mind and the tongue!

None of our business

By Nestor U. Torre

OF LATE, RADIO-TV INTERviewers have been badgering stars and starlets to spill the beans about the stink and kitchen sink aspects of their private lives—the smellier, the better!

When some celebrities protest, the interviewers accuse them of "stupidly" refusing to comply with the terms of the "contract" that all celebrities "sign" with the public. And what contract is *that*? That, to enjoy all of the perks of a stellar career, a performer is ready to surrender his privacy at the altar of public interest!

Implied arrangement

And, if the performer refuses to go along with that implied arrangement, he's showing that he "can't stand the heat, so he should he get out of the kitchen." In other words, stop dreaming of becoming a show biz star!

Fact is, however, no such contract, spoken or unspoken, exists—so, performers aren't obliged to share their private lives with their public, *if* they don't want to.

When you get down to the bottom line, the only thing stars owe their public is their best performance. Constantly. All the time. Period.

We know, of course, that many self-satisfied stars and starlets don't give us that, so *that's* an unspoken and unsigned contract that's flouted more often that it's followed—and *real* cause for us to complain that we've been cheated!

Unfortunately, even show biz luminaries have been brainwashed into believing that "no privacy" hokum. A big star recently said as much, and we pity her for thinking so little of herself that she believes that her talent alone isn't enough capital for her to make it big in show business.

Perhaps when she's even older—and, hopefully, wiser—she'll think better of herself and keep her private life to herself, where it belongs!

Key

So, if performance is key, why do so many people want to know how their favorite stars live, love, lust, sneeze, scratch, belch and fool around?

Because *they* think so little of themselves that they need to see stars diminished by gossip and scandal, so that their own inadequacies won't seem to be so pathetic.

In other words, if Pluperfect Sex Goddess is revealed to be a lush, has bad breath and is miserable in her marriage, she wouldn't be so insultingly Pluperfect anymore, would she?

It's all so terribly cynical and intrusive, and also cruel, because it hits people where they're most vulnerable and defenseless.

Gossip may seem to be fun, superficial and salaciously delicious, but it can also be a crime, because our legal system correctly believes that one of our basic rights is our right to privacy.

Psychological violence

No wonder, too, that quite a number of priests insist that gossiping is a sin, because it inflicts psychological violence on others.

Yes, it's supposed to be just ha-ha fun, but its demeaning and even dehumanizing effect—on both victim *and* gossiper—cannot be gainsaid.

So, do yourself a big favor and decide to no longer be interested in stellar gossip!

Whatever stars and starlets do when they aren't performing is *really* and *truly* —none of our business!

Simple ang ligaya, masarap kasama.
RPN kasama mo
RESCUE
AE

INDEPENDENT

Candidates for Senate in alphabetical order

Richard "Goma" Gomez

Born April 7, 1966, Manila; married. **Education:** UP, Business entrepreneurship (short course); NYU Film School of Continuing Education. **Occupation:** Businessman, Actor. **Advocacy:** Anti-illegal drugs

Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan

Born March 14, 1948, Baguio City; married. **Education:** AIM, MBA; PMA, 1971. **Occupation:** Senator, 1998-2001. **Advocacy:** AFP/PNP reforms, good gov't

Philippine Green Republican Party

Felix "Peck" Cantal

Born May 18, 1949, Ormoc City. **Education:** Oxford University, PhD Political Economics; MLQU, Law. **Occupation:** Economist, businessman. **Advocacy:** education, judicial reforms

NEWS / A2

US House

of Representatives, Senate hold separate hearings on RP human rights violations March 14

WORLD / A19

FBI admits

breaking privacy laws to help investigate suspected terrorists

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

AGELESS:

The mystique of older women; How Armida Siguion-Reyna finally found her groove and decided to look her age. Plus, Ballroom Dancing 101.

METRO / A17

He builds castles

in the air complete with the highest turret down to the drawbridge, and not to forget a dragon to protect the kingdom.

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, March 11, 2007 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 93 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

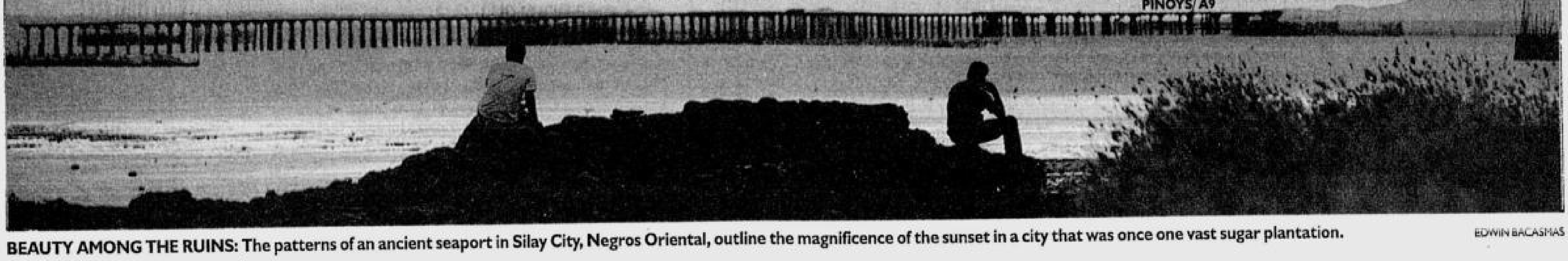
HOMEWORK KO? KINAIN PO NG ASO, AY PUSA, AY DAGA PALA!

Pinoys bad at lying, can't talk sex to kids, says UP study

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MOST FILIPINOS ARE NOT GOOD AT LYING AND PARENTS ARE NOT comfortable discussing sex, drugs and alcohol with their children.

PINOYS/ A9



BEAUTY AMONG THE RUINS: The patterns of an ancient seaport in Silay City, Negros Oriental, outline the magnificence of the sunset in a city that was once one vast sugar plantation.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Police raid Satur home

Also searched neighbors but didn't find solon

By Alcuin Papa

THE POLICE CAME CALLING, brandishing assault rifles, jumping over the gate, and then looking under beds, even peeking into the ceiling.

But they found no trace of Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, a militant lawmaker accused of murders that occurred 22 years ago while he was being held in a maximum security jail.

In a surprise raid yesterday morning, some 20 policemen armed only with a photocopy of an arrest warrant, also searched the houses of Ocampo's neighbors on Gen. De Jesus Street in Heroes Hill, Quezon City.

"They forced their way in without my permission. They climbed our gate, looked inside the closets and under the beds. They even knocked on the ceiling and searched our storeroom," wife Carolina "Bobbie" Malay told the INQUIRER.

"The only place they didn't look was under my skirt," she separately told The Associated Press by telephone.

Malay said the raiders climbed the family's 8-foot high gate to get in.

"Maybe they like action films and fancy

POLICE/ A8

One stroke, everything changes, beauty emerges

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WITH ONE STROKE. AS WITH former president of the UniverSIty of the Philippines and one-time National Security Adviser Emanuel "Noel" Soriano, or with anyone, everything could change with one stroke, a brain stroke.

Discovering meaning and purpose in the aftermath of the disabling blow is consolation enough. But translating these into beauty is indeed a graced response to God's hello. And it takes a village, a community of caring persons, to make this happen.

"It took a whole nation," Noel's wife Angge said, expressing her gratitude.

In July 1996, Noel suffered a stroke that rendered him paralyzed and unable to speak. After three months in the hospital, he was brought home. His wife Angge, a jovial, brave and take-charge type, and their four sons and two daughters were all there for him. But it would take several years before they could get an idea how far their hopes could take them.

Last week, Noel, who just turned 70, held his third exhibit, "A Fisherman's Story," of watercolor paintings at the UP's Delaney Hall. This was something not quite planned, Angge told the enthused crowd, but Noel's persistence (through one-word grunts, signs and body language) paid off.

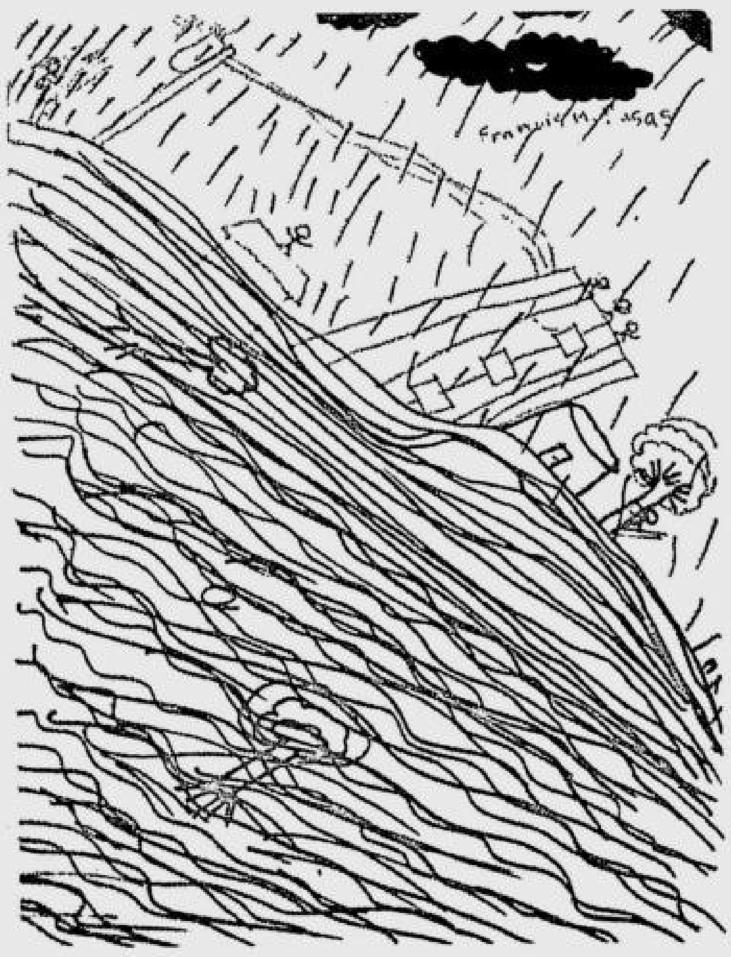
One was for sure, the prayers

ONE/ A9

CERES DOYO

THERE'S A STORY to tell about daring fishermen in a turbulent sea according to the art of Emanuel Soriano. His former colleague in the Cory Cabinet, then Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos drops in at his third exhibit ongoing at UP's Delaney Hall.

Art heals 'Reming' children in Bicol: To imagine is to hope



THE FIERCE LINES (at left) of Francis Basas, 10, stream from his memory of the torrential flooding of mud that engulfed trees and houses including his own. At extreme right, the green marks the spot where Francis is clinging for dear life to the lone tree standing.

By Volt Contreras

IS THERE ROOM FOR ART IN AN EVACUATION center? Can creativity still spring from the silence of a rape victim or the shame of a prostituted woman? So what if an orphan doodles, or if a battered wife prefers her sky red and not blue?

Perhaps the answers can be gleaned from a drawing by 10-year-old Francis Basas who saw his home vanish in the mudflow unleashed by Supertyphoon "Reming" in Albay on Nov. 30.

In an "art workshop" held last month not far from an evacuation center in Daraga town, Basas produced two pieces.

One depicted, in intense pen strokes, how the muddy torrent engulfed the houses and trees in his neighborhood, and how he—a tiny stick figure in the terrible scene—clung for dear life to the last tree standing.

The other is a happy, cartoon-like "family portrait" of the Basas household, including Francis' father and elder brother and sister who did not survive Reming. Notably absent in the drawing were his three other siblings who also died but whose bodies were never found.

"The three missing family members—the fact that he did not put them there—could mean that there's still no closure for the boy," art scholar Flaudette May Datuin said in the course of analyzing the outputs of the two-day workshop.

Datuin is part of a trio of women in the Philippine art community who believe they are helping distressed people who have needs that go beyond material or financial aid, physical care, or professional counseling.

Since March last year, Datuin, visual artist Alma Quinto and gallery owner Norma Lion-

ART HEALS/ A8

One product, one town: Local yet global

By Ronnel W. Domingo

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO MAKE P5,000 grow into P1.5 million?

Just 30 pairs of idle hands.

Until 1990, the wives of farmers and fishers in Tubigon town in Bohol used to sit out their days just waiting for their husbands to return from work. At times, some of them would get a chance to add to their families' income by selling fish in the neighborhood.

But they never had a sustained means of earning money.

Then, in 1990, they were organized into the Tubigon Loomweavers Association.

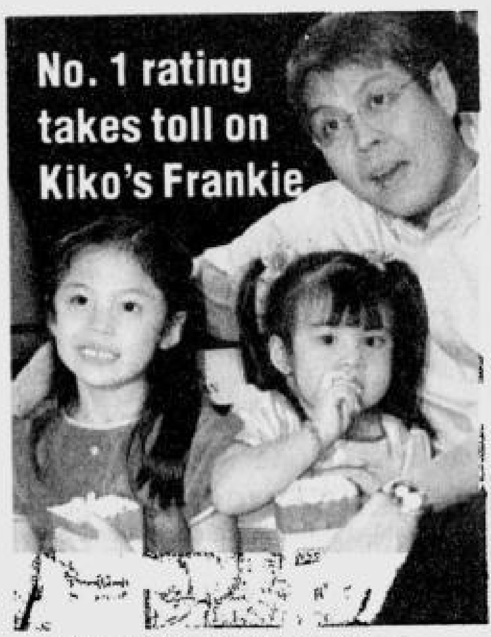
With a P5,000 grant from the municipal government and the rudiments of weaving that had been passed down for generations, the women built an enterprise that is now the Tubigon Loomweavers Multi-purpose Cooperative (TLMPC).

After years of self-improvement and hard work, P5,000 is what each member earns monthly from the business.

The Tubigon undertaking is part of the One Town One Product (Otop) program, which collectively accounted for P1.81 billion in domestic sales and $92.23 million in export revenues in 2006.

Trade Undersecretary Carissa Cruz-Evangelista, coordinator of the pro-

ONE PRODUCT/ A6



No. 1 rating takes toll on Kiko's Frankie

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

DADDY'S GIRLS. Frankie, 6, and Miel, 2, with their favorite senator at mom's birthday concert last month.

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE 90-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD FOR the May senatorial elections has taken its toll on independent candidate Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan's daughter Frankie.

Pangilinan, who topped the Social Weather Stations' latest survey on senatorial preferences, admitted that being No. 1 in the poll did not come easy, especially to members of his family.

NO. 1 RATING/ A6